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ABSTRACT

A joint project of the United States Postal Service and the National Council of Teachers of English, this book provides ideas and activities to help students in grades 4 through 8 get into the letter writing habit. Section 1 stresses the joy of writing letters to friends, relatives, pen pals, and celebrities. The second section describes letters that get results, such as those asking for information, to the editor, to radio and television stations, to business, and to government (up to and including the president). Ways to personalize stationery, the uses of postcards and greeting cards, and making your own envelopes are covered in section 3. Section 4 describes ways to use letters for fun, including playing games by mail, sending people poetry and stories, team writing with friends, artistic embellishment of envelopes, writing with invisible ink, writing for others who cannot, diary letters, and stamp collecting. The standard ways to address envelopes, postcards, and packages are promoted in the fifth chapter, which also explains zip codes and lists state and other common abbreviations. The final chapter recounts how a letter from an 11-year-old changed Abraham Lincoln's face. (JL)

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CS207287

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL
Washington, DC 20260-0010

Dear Friend:

This booklet is all about letters--what people write in them, why, where and how they send them, and how they feel about getting them.

Try the ideas in this book and get the letter-writing habit. It's a good habit, one that will get results for you, bring you closer to your friends and family, and lift your spirits and those of the people you write.

One joy of letter writing is letter getting. Don't be afraid to reach out with your words. You can share friendships, fun, games, ideas, love and sorrow. The best way to get letters is to write them. There is magic waiting. People care.

Sincerely,

William F. Bolger

William F. Bolger
Postmaster General

P.S. Write soon!

Contents

4 The Joy of Letter Writing

16 Letters Make Things Happen

28 Making Your Mail

36 Fun with Letters

56 Addressing Your Mail

62 Anything Can Happen

The Joy of Letter Writing

Have you received a letter? Have you written a letter? You can share the joy of exchanging letters with lots of people. You can write letters that make you, your friends, relatives, and pen pals feel good. It's not hard to do. Write soon.

Friends Near and Dear

Are there times when you can't tell a friend something special that happened to you because there are always other people listening? Or maybe you are too shy to talk about it? Try writing a letter. You don't have to send it, unless you really want to share. Maybe your friend has the same problem, but the two of you will never know until someone writes that first letter.

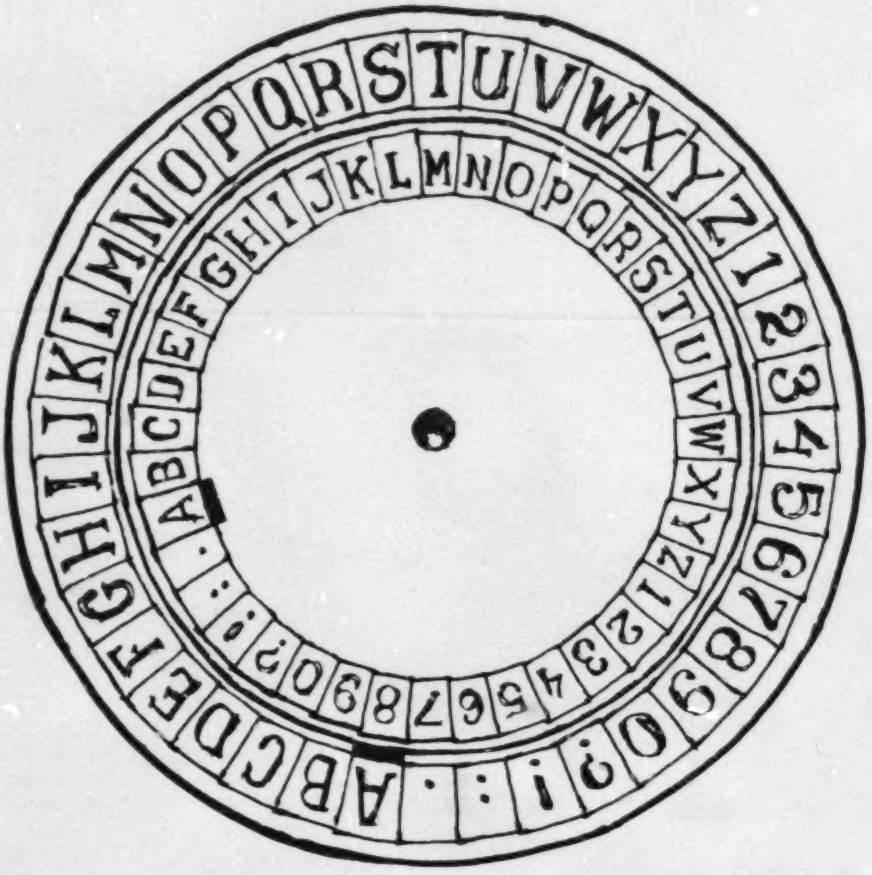
You can mail notes and letters to people who live across town, in your neighborhood, or even next door. Your schedules may be so different that you never get to spend much time together.

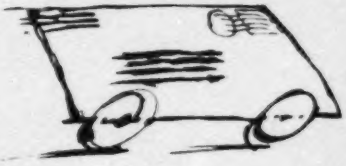
When friends are in a different class or go to another school, it is even harder to find time to spend together. Try writing. Your teacher or local postmaster might be willing to help your class organize a classroom or school post office. It could be a shoe box on your desk, a larger cardboard box for the entire classroom, or even a plan for an in-school postal system with the other classrooms.

If you want to make absolutely certain of your privacy, establish a secret code for writing letters. The library has books that contain secret codes, or you can make up one of your own. Substitute different letters, numbers, or symbols for the letters of the alphabet. You can use this wheel to send your message in secret code. Suppose you want to write:

MEET ME AFTER SCHOOL

Here's how to do it. Look at the inner circle and find the letter M. Then look at the outer circle and substitute the letter opposite the M for the first letter in your code.


A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 ? ! : . A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 ? ! : . A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 ? ! : .



Then do the rest of the letters the same way until the entire message is in code.

TLL1 TL HMILY ZJOVVE

Come up with your own message. Use the wheel to put it into code. Then send copies to your friends and see if they can solve it. If they can't, show them how to use the Secret Code Wheel and you can exchange all sorts of secret messages.

Friends Faraway

People move and travel a great deal. Before we had trains, automobiles, and airplanes, people often lived in one place all their lives. They seldom traveled more than twenty or thirty miles away from home. Who do you know that has moved? Were you the one who moved? If you or a friend move, you still can share new adventures. Exchange letters that describe the neighborhood, comparing it with other places that you both know. Tell or ask about the friends and schools. Where to buy bubblegum? How long of a walk to catch the bus? Don't forget to tell about the new people you both are seeing. Any potential pals? What about the teachers?

Having your friends move away is always difficult. Writing letters to them helps. Here are some ideas.

> Keep friends up to date on all the things happening in your school or community.
>
> Let them know how the Little League or soccer team is doing.
>
> Describe the new teachers.
>
> Tell about the most recent shenanigans of the class clown.
>
> Describe the new kid who just moved into the neighborhood.

In short, keep your friends in mind as you go about your day. Be careful not to make it sound like, "It's too bad you're gone . . . see what you're missing."

If you are the one who moved, you will have lots of news to share with lots of people. You could write to several of your friends at the same time by trying one of the following suggestions:

> If you have news to share with everyone, make copies of your letter; however, try to add a personal note to each copy.
>
> If you hung around with a particular crowd at your old place, you might want to share some information with everyone. You could write a letter to several people and send it to one person to pass along.
>
> If you want to write a letter to your old class at school, address it to the teacher and ask the teacher to read it aloud or to post it for all your pals to see.

Be sure to include your return address on your letters so people can write back to you. It can be fun and exciting to keep on learning about each other through letter writing.

Relatives Close and Distant

Who are your relatives? How many of the following names describe you?

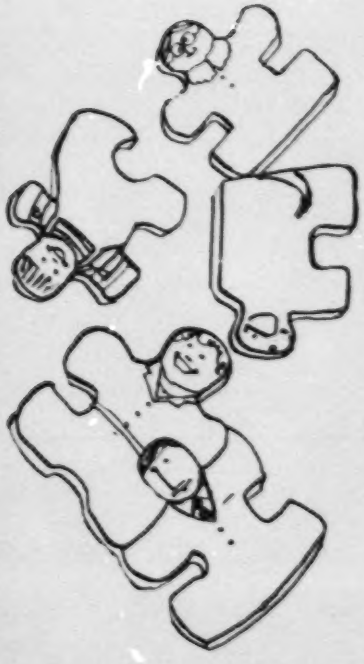
daughter	son
stepdaughter	stepson
granddaughter	grandson
great-granddaughter	great-grandson
great-great-granddaughter	great-great-grandson
sister	brother
half sister	half brother
stepsister	stepbrother
sister-in-law	brother-in-law
niece	nephew
great-niece	great-nephew
aunt	uncle
cousin	cousin

Can you think of others? If you make a list of the names that describe you, then it is easier to think about your relatives. They are all part of your family.

Now that you know who you are, it is like solving a puzzle. If your grandfather has a sister, then you have a great-aunt. If your mother has an aunt, she is also your great-aunt. Both great-aunts are the same person, and you are her great-niece or great-nephew.

The game of listing your relatives can be fun and last all your life. The list is always changing as you grow older. Some of the people on your list are close to you. You may live with them or see them often. Others may live some distance from you, and you may hardly know them.

You may write to some relatives around holiday times each year, sending them holiday greetings or thank-you notes for gifts. Sending letters at other times is a good way to keep in touch with, and to learn more about, your family.



Make a list of your relatives: grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and so forth. Then write one letter a month to someone on your list.

Send a letter called a "round robin" to your grandparents from all their grandchildren. Start the letter with some

news about yourself, then route it to your brothers, sisters, and cousins, one at a time. Each relative adds a bit of news and sends the letter to the next name. The last person on the list mails the whole collection of notes to the grandparents. They will love the letter and may write back to all the grandchildren.

Use letters to explore your family history. Ask your parents to tell you of their life history. What do they remember of *their* grandparents? What was school like when they were growing up? What are their observations on how the world has changed in their lifetime? Write down what you learn.

Now that you have started to learn about your ancestors, write to other relatives and ask them questions too.

Collect and save all the letters you receive. This is something you can start now that you can continue to do all your life. Someday, when you are older and have become an ancestor, you will have these wonderful letters full of information and love to share with others.

Letter writing to your relatives can make you feel closer and more important to them—and you to your relatives.

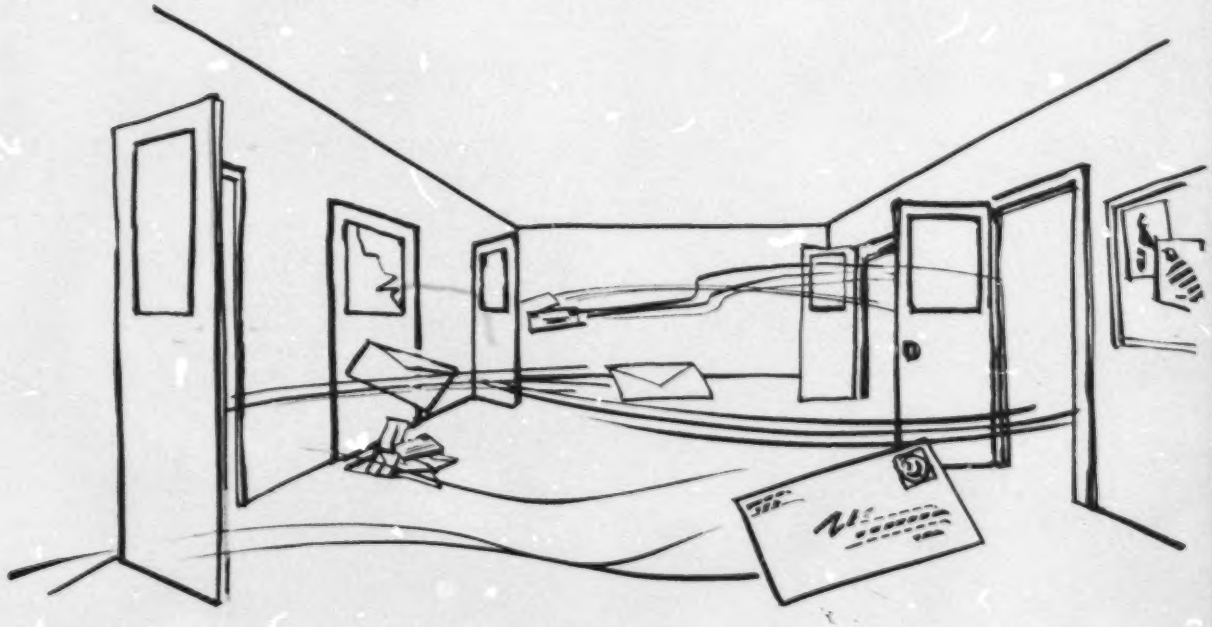
Pen Pals

Pen pals can become friends. It is a good way to learn about the ideas and experiences of someone whose life is different from your own. Friendships started through letters often continue for years—even lifetimes.

How do you go about finding a pen pal? First, decide what kind of pen pal you would like to have. Would you like to correspond with someone your own age who goes to a different school? Would you like to write letters to someone in a different town or state? Think about whether or not you want to correspond with a pen pal with whom you have things in common. Maybe you would rather exchange letters with someone whose outlook and experience might be different from your own. Is there a particular state or region of the country that you want to know more about? A pen pal could give you an insider's view.

Your teacher might be able to set up a class exchange of letters with another group of students. These might be students from another school in the same grade. The school might be in the same town, in a town by the same name in another state, or in some place that you are learning about in school.

Pen pals in foreign countries can provide all kinds of new and interesting views on their way of life. You will need to find a pen pal who writes English, if you can not write in another language; however, maybe you can find someone to translate letters for you.



There are several organizations listed below that help find pen pals for students. Pick one, then write to that organization. Enclose your name, address, age, and sex. Tell them about your interests and what language, other than English, that you can speak or write. Tell them also if there is a particular country or state in which you are interested.

If there is a fee, enclose a money order or a check from a parent. Do not send coins or stamps. Also enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

League of Friendship, Inc.
P.O. Box 509
Mount Vernon, OH 43050

Ages 12–25. $1 service charge and self-addressed, stamped envelope. You will receive a foreign name and a suggestion sheet for letter writing.

Pen Pals
International Friendship League, Inc.
22 Batterymarch
Boston, MA 02109

Incorporated in 1948, the League's file has names from 129 countries. For descriptive folder and application blank, send self-addressed, stamped envelope. Persons under 19 years of age, registration fee is $3; over 19, $5. You will receive names and addresses from two different countries.

Student Letter Exchange
910 Fourth Street S.E.
Austin, MN 55912

Ages 10–19. $1 for foreign name; 50¢ for American name. Orders of 15 or more foreign names, 90¢ each. Enclose self-addressed, stamped envelope.

World Pen Pals
1690 Como Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108

Ages 10–19. $2 service fee (special group fee, $1.75 each for six or more names). Allow two weeks for reply. You will receive a foreign name, World Pen Pal newsletter, and suggestion sheet. Enclose self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Write to your pen pal as soon as you receive a name. Neatness is important. Usually, pen pals from abroad can speak and write English. But their English may be awkward and sometimes confusing, just as your way of writing may be for them. Keep your sentences simple and avoid words or slang that your pen pal might not understand.

If you don't receive a reply within a few weeks, return the pen pal name to the organization, enclose another self-addressed, stamped envelope, and explain that you have not received a reply. The organization will probably send you another name.

How do you keep a pen pal? Your first letter to your new friend should contain all the information necessary to introduce yourself: your name and age, a description of yourself (and perhaps a picture), and some background about your family, pets, hobbies, and other interests. Don't forget to list your favorites: colors, weather, foods, music, and sports.

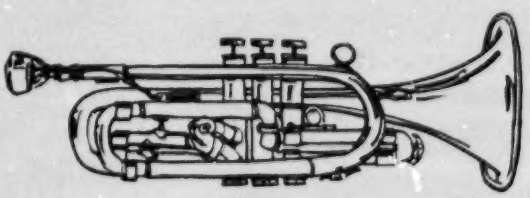
Describe your town, state, or geographical region and how it affects the way you live. For example, if you live in the mountains of Idaho, your life is very different than if you lived in Chicago, the Florida seashore, the New Mexico desert, or the Iowa plains.

Ask questions about your pen pal's home, school, friends, interests, and ideas. As the two of you become better acquainted, it will become easier to write to each other. You will know which of your experiences will be of most interest to each other.

Don't forget that it will be important to answer your pen pal's letters promptly. It is hard to wait for letters you want to receive from friends—especially new ones.

Fan Mail

Did you ever write and actually send a fan-mail letter? Famous people enjoy being told that their efforts are appreciated. So does the person next door. You can write a fan-mail letter to anyone who has made you feel proud or laugh or cry. Let them know they inspired you to act or think in a new way. Your letter will be easy to write. Pretend you are talking to them and explain what happened to you because of them.



Make a list of those people to whom you would like to send fan mail. Here are some suggestions to help you get started on your list.

A favorite musician whose records you listen to or whose concert you have attended.

An author whom you have just discovered or whose books you have enjoyed for some time.

A cartoonist whose strips you read and whose books you collect.

A band or orchestra leader whose music you enjoy.

The President of the United States.

A United States Senator or Congressperson.

The leader of a religious or social or political organization.

A favorite television or movie actor or actress.

The person who played the flute solo that you enjoyed at the high school band concert.

The coach of the sports team that you enjoyed watching play, and especially the players that you thought did a good job.

The mayor and city council who budgeted money for a new recreation center so young people, like yourself, now have a place to use in the summers and after school.

The person, especially when a relative of yours, who won the school spelling bee.

How long is your list? Which person do you want to write to first? Keep your letter short, simple, and to the point. You may get an answer.

Finding the correct address to which to mail your letter is possible. Learn a few places to start looking up addresses; be willing to spend some time doing it. It will be worth both your effort and your patience when you get a letter in reply to the one you sent.

Some of the easiest places to look for addresses are telephone books, newspapers, programs from performances, and directories of organizations. Your teacher and the school or local librarian can help also. They will know about books and magazines that contain addresses for all kinds of people.

If you know the organization or agency with which a celebrity is associated, send your letter to the address on the following list. Your letter will be forwarded to the celebrity or the celebrity's agent or staff.

Motion Pictures

Vice President of Public Relations
Universal Studios
100 Universal City Plaza
Universal City, CA 91608

Director of Public Relations for Features
Warner Bros., Inc.
4000 Warner Boulevard
Burbank, CA 91522

Vice President of Public Relations
Columbia Pictures
711 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Supervisor, Studio's Mail Dept.
Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corp.
10201 W. Pico Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90035

Director, World-Wide Publicity
United Artists Corporation
729 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10019

Television

Manager, Audience Information
ABC-TV
1330 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10019

Vice President—Press & Publicity
NBC-TV
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10020

Warner Brothers TV
4000 Warner Boulevard
Burbank, CA 91522

Vice President of Press Information
CBS-TV
51 West 52nd Street
New York, NY 10019

Vice President of Public Relations
Children's Television Workshop
1 Lincoln Plaza
New York, NY 10023

Vice President of Public Relations
Paramount TV
5451 Marathon Street
Hollywood, CA 90038

Organizations

American Federation of Television
and Radio Artists
1350 Avenue of the Americas, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10019

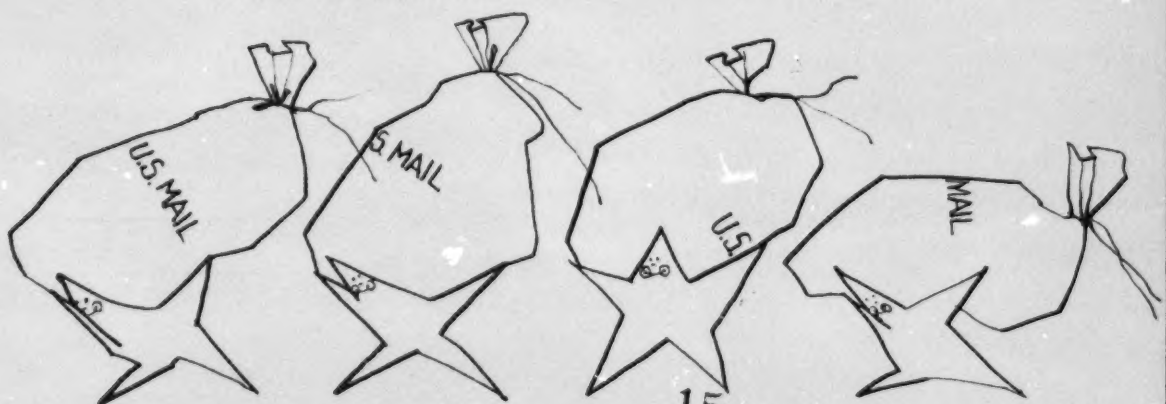
Actors Equity
165 W. 46th Street
New York, NY 10036

Screen Actors Guild
7750 Sunset Boulevard
Hollywood, CA 90046

American Federation of Musicians
1500 Broadway
New York, NY 10036

William Morris Agency
1350 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10003

Remember that most celebrities get lots of mail, and you may not receive an answer right away. Celebrities care about and, when possible, answer their fan mail. They know that the quickest way to lose loyal fans is to ignore their letters. There are people waiting to hear from you. Write soon.



Saving Letters

Devote an empty drawer to the letters you receive and watch it fill up, or bind your letters with string or rubber bands. To make your collection more permanent and attractive, consider some of the following ideas:

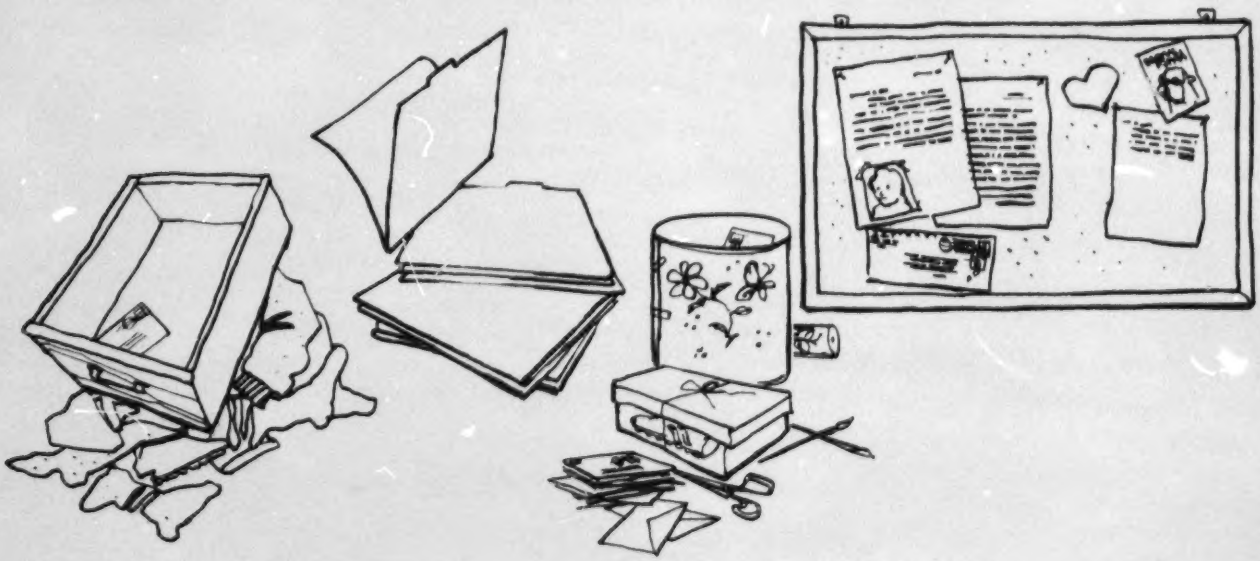
Decorate a shoe box or other small box. Cover it with gift wrapping paper, shelf paper (which you decorate), or adhesive-backed paper. Then file your letters neatly inside, perhaps indexed by sender or date.

Start a scrapbook of letters, perhaps including photographs and other mementos of people you've been writing to.

Keep each correspondent's letters in a separate manila file folder. This is also a good way to organize your correspondence to businesses, editors, and so forth.

Devote a bulletin board in your room to your favorite letters. Keep any personal and private letters in a private place.

The letters that you take the trouble to collect now will one day become part of your most treasured memories. Did you write to someone today?



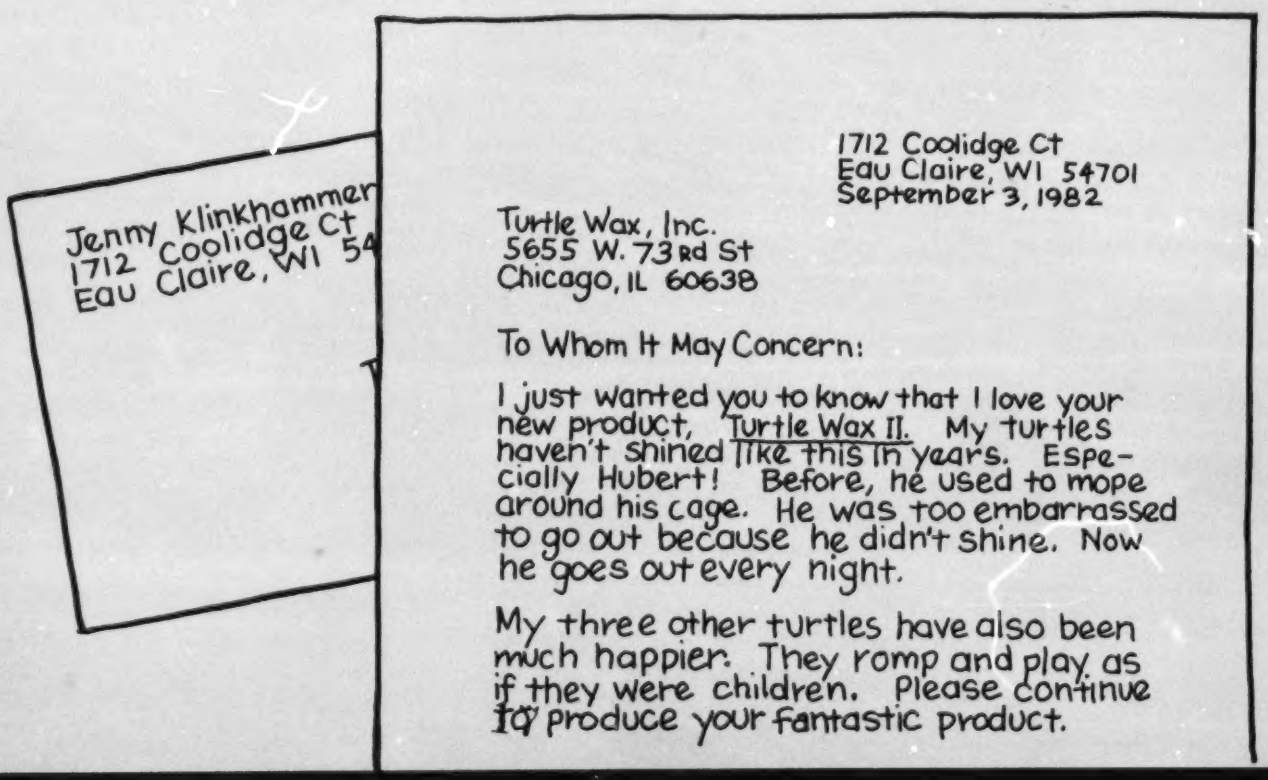
Letters Make Things Happen

Have you ever been thrilled with something you bought or received as a gift? Have you ever been upset by a television program? What did you do? Did you tell someone? Did you write a letter? Letters get results—when you have a complaint, a question, or a compliment.

You can also receive information of all kinds—instructions for building an ant ranch, tips for taking better photographs, recipes using peanut butter, or facts about endangered animals.

The standard business letter format will help your letter get results. Put your return address in the upper right corner. Envelopes are usually thrown away, and you want your reader to be able to write back to you. Write the date under your return address so both you and your reader have a record of when you sent your letter. Before you write the salutation or greeting, write the name of the person you are writing to and the full address, just as it will appear on the envelope. If you write a second letter to the same person, you won't have to track down the address all over again. Explain your reason for writing in the body of the letter, then close with an expression like "Sincerely yours" or "Yours truly."

Make a copy of your letters. You can use carbon paper as you write, or make your copy on a copying machine.


Jenny Klinkhammer
1712 Coolidge Ct
Eau Claire, WI 54
1712 Coolidge Ct
Eau Claire, WI 54701
September 3, 1982
Turtle Wax, Inc.
5655 W. 73rd St
Chicago, IL 60638
To Whom It May Concern:
I just wanted you to know that I love your new product, Turtle Wax II. My turtles haven't shined like this in years. Especially Hubert! Before, he used to mope around his cage. He was too embarrassed to go out because he didn't shine. Now he goes out every night.
My three other turtles have also been much happier. They romp and play as if they were children. Please continue to produce your fantastic product.

Information

How do you get answers to your questions? Often you'll find out by talking to your family, friends, or teachers. Or you'll turn to books, magazines, or newspapers. Sometimes these methods don't work or don't bring up-to-date information. Then you might try writing a letter.

Of course, you can't expect other people to do your research for you, especially for a school project. But often you can write to people who will steer you in the right direction and will help you gather the information you need.

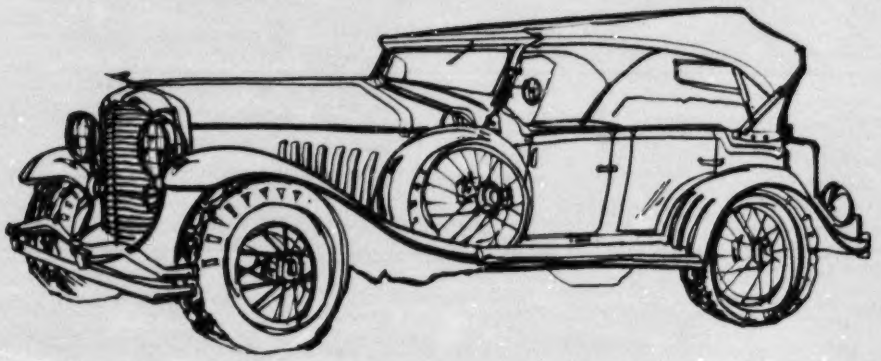
Do you have a question about your home or farm? Your county agent can provide information ranging from raising animals to painting your room. You'll find the address of your county agent in the telephone book.

Many publishers of encyclopedias have a research service available to owners of their encyclopedia. If the answer to your question is not in the encyclopedia, the research department may be able to help you.

Some specialty magazines will answer questions on their topic or refer you to previous articles they have published. Address your letter to the editor.

Most libraries have a reference librarian who can suggest books for you to consult. Of course, it's quickest to ask in person at your school or local library, but you may want to write to a university library, a state historical library or other state library, or the Library of Congress (send your letter to Washington, DC 20540).

Perhaps your question should be directed to a museum. There are thousands of museums across the country, ranging from tiny local museums to the huge Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. You'll discover there are art museums, music museums, antique car



museums, and professional sports museums, to name a few. *The Unusual-by-Mail Catalog* (edited by Prudence McCullough and published by St. Martin's Press) lists museum shops that sell booklets, kits, and projects by mail. You can also ask your librarian to help you locate the names and addresses of museums that might answer your question

The public relations department of a company is a good source of information. Some of the larger companies may have produced booklets on your topic and will be glad to send them to you. Send your questions about cars to a car manufacturer, write a letter to a sewing machine company with questions about sewing. You can often find the address of a company on the package of one of its products or in a magazine or newspaper advertisement.

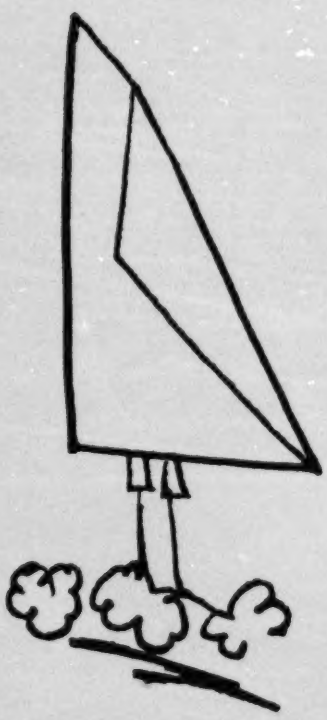
An excellent source of information is the U.S. Government Printing Office, which issues hundreds of booklets and pamphlets. Write to

Superintendent of Documents
Government Printing Office
Washington, DC 20402

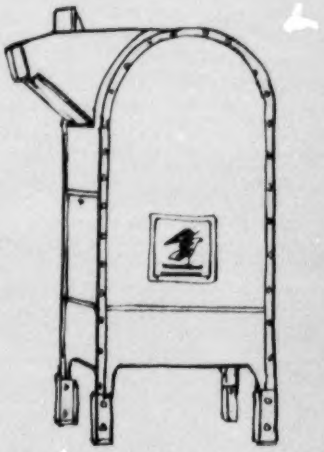
and ask to be put on the mailing list for *Selected U.S. Government Publications.* Each month you'll receive a listing of new booklets on topics ranging from food to nature to do-it-yourself projects to space exploration. Also ask for a copy of *Consumer's Guide to Federal Publications,* a booklet that will give you even more addresses and publications to investigate.

Another helpful booklet listing free and inexpensive government publications is *Consumer Information.* Order your copy from

Consumer Information Center
Pueblo, CO 81009



If you cannot find the information you need in these government publications, try writing to the government agency that deals with your topic. For example, write to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to ask for information about space flights. Send a letter to the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration to ask questions about the weather and about oceanographic research.



Two guides to free and inexpensive materials are *1001 Valuable Things You Can Get Free* (written by Mort Weisinger and published by Bantam Books) and *The Catalog of Free Things* (written by Jeffrey Feinman and Mark Weiss and published by William Morrow). Check at your library for the most recent edition of these books. There may be other guides in your library to free and inexpensive items.

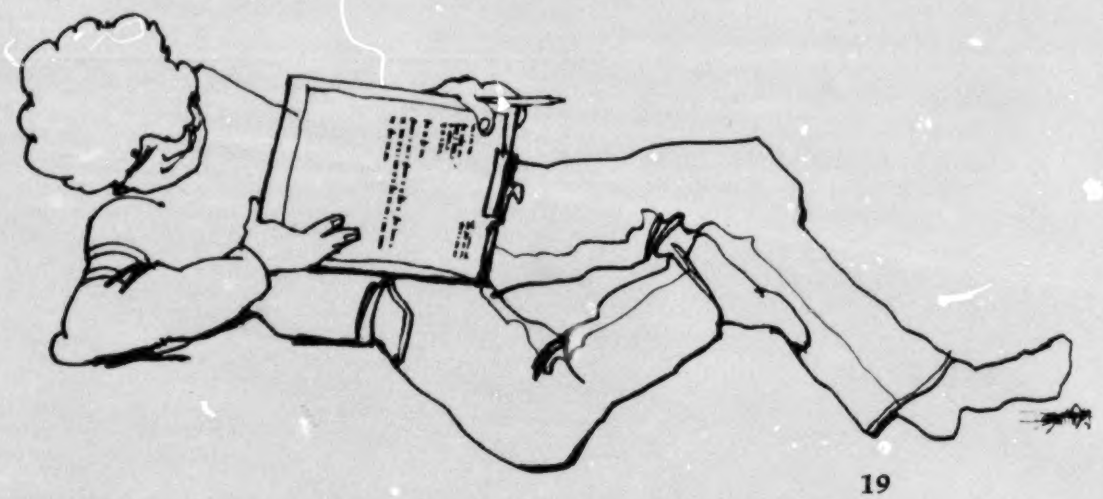
If you'd like information on good books to read, send letters and self-addressed, stamped envelopes to

American Library Association
Children's Service Division
50 East Huron Street
Chicago, IL 60611

Children's Book Council
67 Irving Place
New York, NY 10003

Be sure to tell both organizations how old you are and what kinds of books you like to read. They will send you booklists or tell you how to order them.

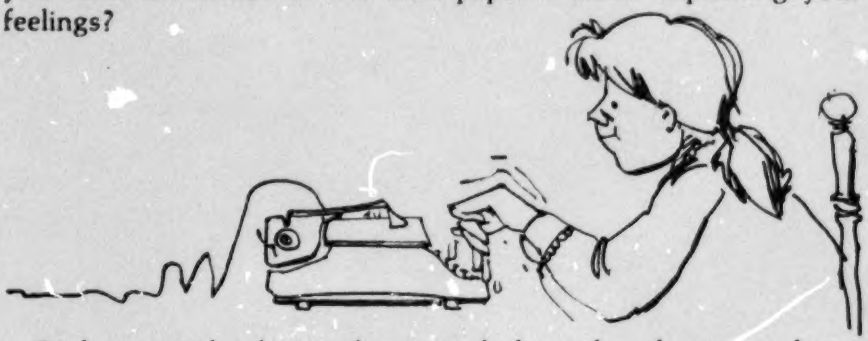
People, companies, and government agencies will be glad to send you catalogs, brochures, pamphlets, and information. All it takes is a letter from you.



To the Editor

Most magazines and newspapers carry a "Letters to the Editor" column. People usually write to magazines to comment on an article that appeared in the magazine. People writing to newspapers may comment on the coverage of the news, as well as give their opinions on the hot dogs served at the county fair or the money spent on fireworks for the local Fourth of July celebration.

Do you have an opinion on a local or national event? Why do you feel the way you do? Does this event involve you? What action should be taken? Can you back up your opinion with facts? Can you send the editor of the local paper a letter explaining your feelings?

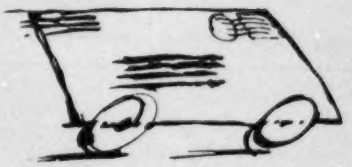


Find an article that makes you feel good and write a letter explaining your feelings. Why do you like the article? Do you agree with the writer's opinion? Is the writer truthful? Is the article about something you'd like to do? Is it a true story with a happy ending? How do you think other people would react to the article?

Now find a magazine or newspaper article that makes you angry. Write a letter to the editor. Explain what you find disturbing. Is it the tone or opinion of the writer? Is the writer deliberately expressing an opinion? Does this writer have the facts straight? Or are you bothered by the event or action reported in the article? Could something have been done to prevent the event or action?

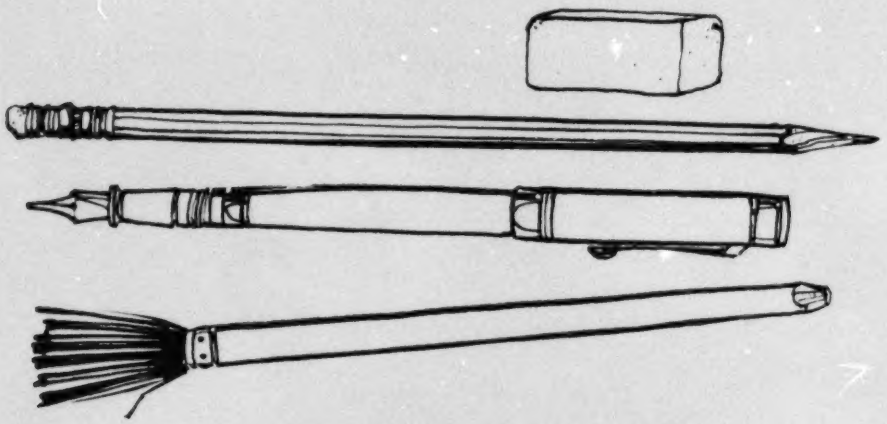
Has the situation been corrected? What would you do to fix things?

When you write your letter to the editor, you don't have to mention all that you know about your topic. Remember to be informative and to the point. Don't wait too long to write. Not all letters are used, but perhaps yours will be printed.



Many magazines and newspapers limit the length of letters they print, so read the guidelines carefully before you start writing. Include your name and address with your letter, although your name might not be printed. Perhaps only your initials will appear. You'll find the address of the magazine publisher near the front of each issue. It might be directly under the table of contents. Check the editorial page for the address of your newspaper publisher.

Letters to the editor get results—but these results usually don't mean letters in your mailbox. Letters to the editor get people thinking and sometimes get people to change their attitudes and actions. Letters to the editor also get people writing. You might see a letter to the editor talking about a letter you wrote!



To Radio and Television Stations

Letters to radio and television stations get results too. Programs are sometimes added and dropped according to what people say about them. Of course, one unfavorable letter about a program will not lead to its cancellation. But station managers care about what people think of current programs. Your comments are important for planning future programming and will be kept on file for the Federal Communications Commission to read when reviewing the station's license renewal.

Letters to station managers can be about one program you see or hear, or the letters can discuss all the programs on that particular station.

Watch one television station for a week and keep a record of the programs you watch. Write the manager and explain why you watched these programs. Why did you decide not to watch other programs?

Pick out the worst program you saw and write a letter explaining why it was so bad.

What was the best show? Tell the station manager why you liked it.

Write to your favorite radio station. Explain why you listen to it. Can you suggest ways to improve its programming? Does it play too much music? Too little? Does it cover local events?

You'll find the addresses for local radio and television stations in your telephone book. If the station is in another town or if you have a cable television hookup, your librarian may be able to help you locate the addresses.

Most television programs are not produced by your local station, but by the major networks. In addition to writing the local station, you may want to write to the network. Do you feel there is too much violence on television? Do you watch the Saturday morning cartoons? Do you enjoy the after-school movie specials? Are there other types of programs you'd like to see? If you have comments to make, write.

Another reason to write to a radio or television station is to publicize a school or club activity. Is your school planning a fair or carnival? Is your scout troop having a pancake supper? Is your "Y" having a paper drive? If so, you may be able to use letters to get a free message (public service announcement) on the radio or television.

Write a brief announcement describing the event. Tell exactly what's happening. List the time, the date, the place, and the purpose of the event. Who is invited? Is there a charge? Is there a phone number people can call for further information?

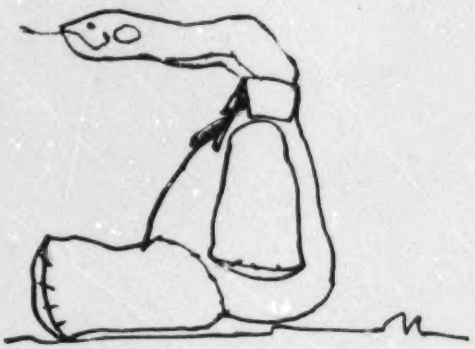
Make several copies of your announcement, then write a short letter to each station manager. Ask that your public service announcement be read over the air. Be sure to send the announcement four to six weeks before the event takes place.

To Business

You can use letters to transact business. You can order a green felt hat, complain about a mystery book with pages missing, ask questions about how your record player works, or praise the manufacturer of your new jogging shoes.

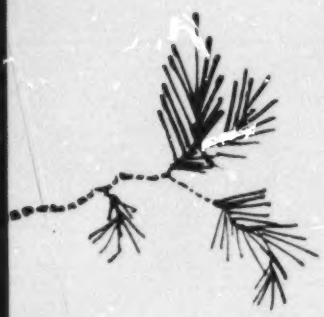
Here is a list of some business letters you might want to write. Can you think of other reasons for writing?

Pick an item you've purchased recently. How well or how badly does it work for you? Do you have suggestions for improving it? Write a letter to the company describing what you like and don't like about the item.



Investigate an advertising claim. Can you really blow bigger bubbles with "Great Bopper Bubble Gum?" Does "Slippery Cola" really go down smoother? Check out these claims and write a letter to the company.

Ask a parent or teacher to help you identify the companies in your town that are active in sponsoring civic affairs. For example, a bank may sponsor a marathon run, or a gas station may support city parks. Write a letter of appreciation.



Learn about the positions that various companies take on important issues. What does your local power company have to say about nuclear energy? What is a national paper company doing about forest preservation? Write a letter giving your opinion.

Look at the appearance of some local businesses. Is there one that plants brightly colored flowers every spring or that has done something unusual to spruce up the neighborhood? Write and tell the company you appreciate its efforts.

Letters to businesses get results. If you have a complaint or a problem, managers try to solve it. And if you send a letter of praise, they'll be delighted to hear from you.

To Government

Letters can get you in touch with government officials—officials at the local, state, or federal level. Letters can bring you information and can deliver your complaints, your compliments, and your suggestions.

If you have a simple question to ask a local official, it's often easier to telephone than to write. For example, you may want to know whether the bus runs on Sunday. A phone call to the public transit office should bring you a quick answer. But what if you want to tell someone why the bus should run on Sunday? Then a letter would be more effective.

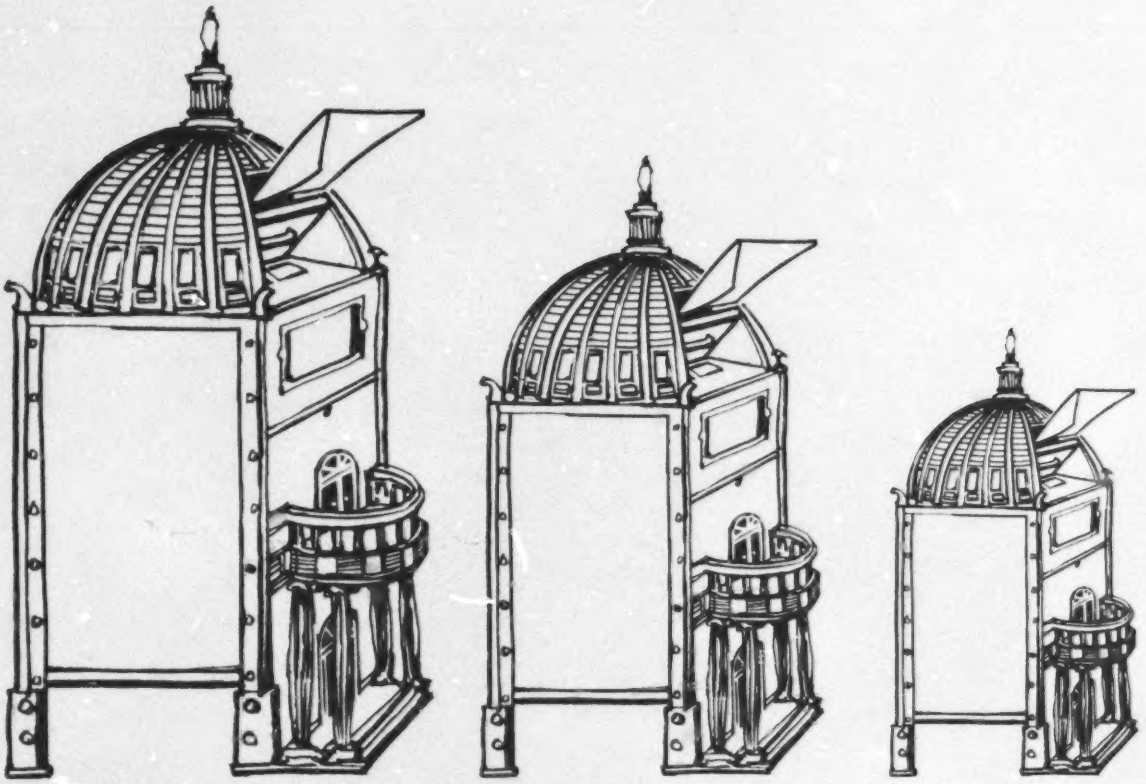
The following list will suggest some agencies to contact and some reasons for writing. Make your own list of letters to write.

Write the mayor with your questions and concerns about how your town is run. Your letter may be passed on to another person or agency for action, but it may be important to let the mayor know your feelings first.

Write the town clerk in the town where you were born to get a copy of your birth certificate.

Write to a member of your town council, city council, or county board to make suggestions about street lighting or a site for a new playground.

Write the fire department if you have a question about outdoor burning or storage of painting supplies.



Write the police department for information on protecting your valuables.

Write the park department with inquiries or comments about baseball, ice skating, picnicking, swimming, or other recreational activities.

You should be able to find the addresses of your local officials in your telephone directory.

Questions or comments about state issues should be sent to the branches of state government. A few reasons for writing are listed below. Can you think of other reasons for writing your state officials?

Write to the department of natural resources to obtain information on your state parks, to learn the dates of fishing and hunting seasons, or to learn what your state is doing to protect its natural resources.

Write to the state historical society with questions about the history of your state or for information about museums and historical exhibits.

Write to the department of tourism for information about vacationing and sight-seeing in your state.

Write to the state police to learn about traffic rules or safety precautions.

Write to the department of aeronautics for information about regulation of airplanes, hot-air balloons, and hang gliders.

Write to the department of animal health and licensing for information on caring for your pet or on careers in the animal sciences.

Write to the department of agriculture for information about garden crops.

Write to the department of labor to learn if you are old enough to get a job in your state or to find out about work permits.

Your library has a directory of state offices. Ask your librarian if you're unsure of which agency to write to.

Feel free to write to state offices in another state. Find out about the parks there, or vacation areas, or the history of the state.

You may want to write to the governor of your state. Is there a political issue that you'd like to comment on to the governor? Do you agree with the governor's stand? Or send your opinion to your state representative or senator. Do you know how your representative will vote on a major issue? How do you feel about the issue? A parent, teacher, or librarian can help you with the names of these officials.

Federal government officials also like to receive letters to learn the feelings of people across the country. If you have an opinion or a question, write a letter.

Why not go all the way to the top? Write a letter to the President of the United States. Let the President know how you feel about gun control, nuclear power, registration for the draft, the arms race, money spent on space exploration, or foreign aid. Read your daily newspaper or watch or listen to newscasts to become familiar with national and world affairs. Address your mail to

(Name of the President)
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

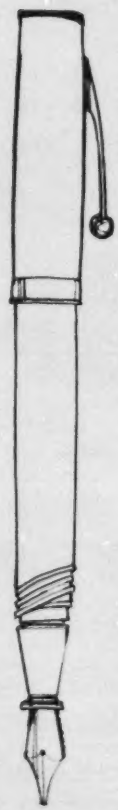
Write to your Congressperson about these same issues. A parent, teacher, or librarian can help you with the names. Send your letters to

(Name of Senator)
Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

(Name of Representative)
House of Representatives
Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

There may be other federal agencies and offices that you wish to contact. If you're unsure of the name of the agency and the address, ask your librarian for help.

Write letters to the editor, to radio and television stations, to business, and to government. Your letters will get results—if you get busy and write.



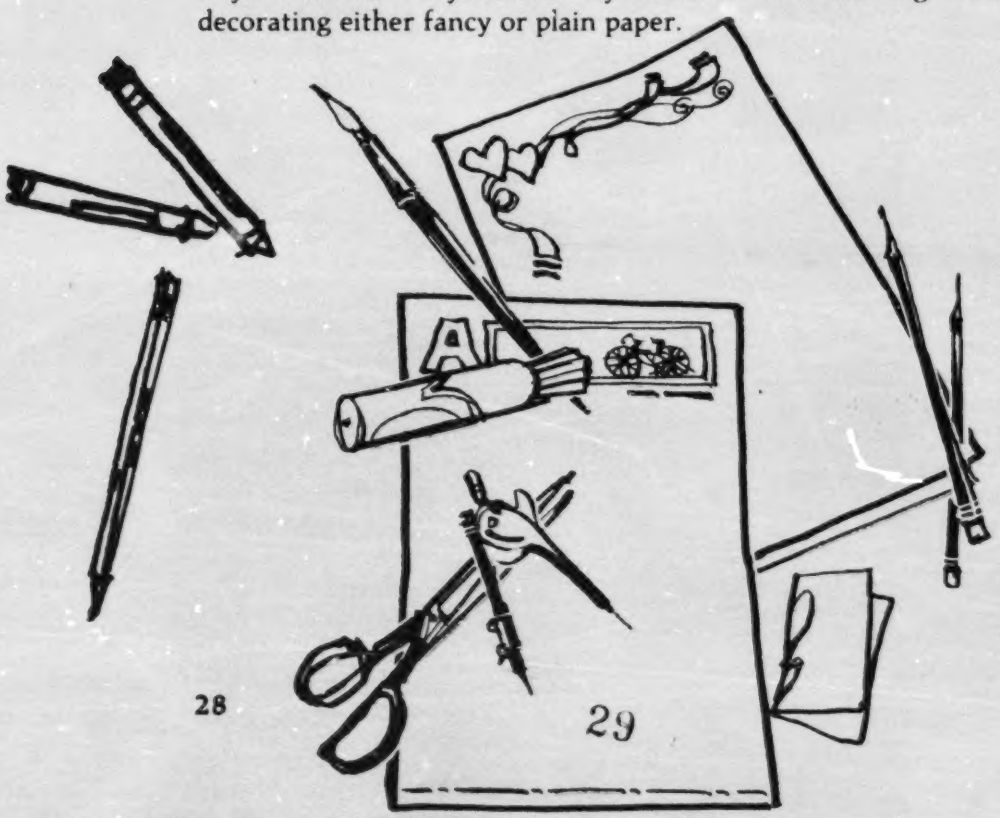
Making Your Mail

Would you like to use stationery that says "This is me"? How about brightly colored balloons at the top of the page? Or your monogram? Perhaps a small yellow rose is what you'd choose on your stationery. Pale blue paper and envelopes might set the proper mood for you. You'll find a wide variety of different styles and sizes of notepaper at a stationery or department store. The best way to have stationery that says "This is me!" is to make it yourself.

Stationery

Your friends and relatives will enjoy receiving letters from you on personalized stationery and may save these letters to enjoy again and again.

Start by looking for some unique paper in an art supply store: something bright and vivid, or paper that has an unusual texture or finish. Even plain white paper can make interesting stationery if you decorate it yourself. Try some of the following ideas for decorating either fancy or plain paper.



Use a felt-tip pen to make a continuous border at the top, at the bottom, or all around your sheet of paper. Use several colors and make your own rainbow.

Cut your paper into interesting shapes: hearts, stars, moons, leaves, animals, whatever you think of.

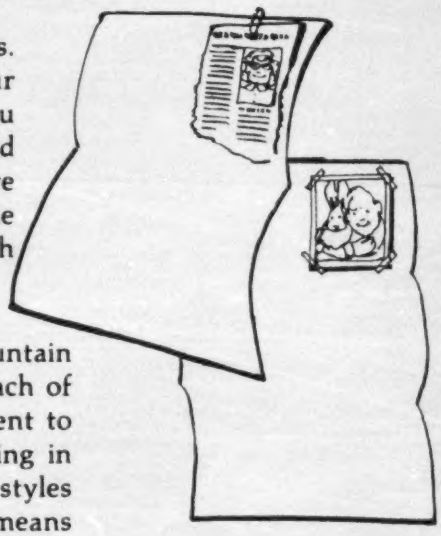
Carefully carve your initials backwards in half a potato or carrot. Scrape away all except your initials—they should stand out about a quarter inch. Dip the vegetable in tempera paint and stamp your initials on your stationery and on the envelope flaps.

Instead of your initials, carve a favorite animal, flower, sport, or hobby. Stamp your personal symbol on your paper, remembering that it will print the reverse of the way it is cut.

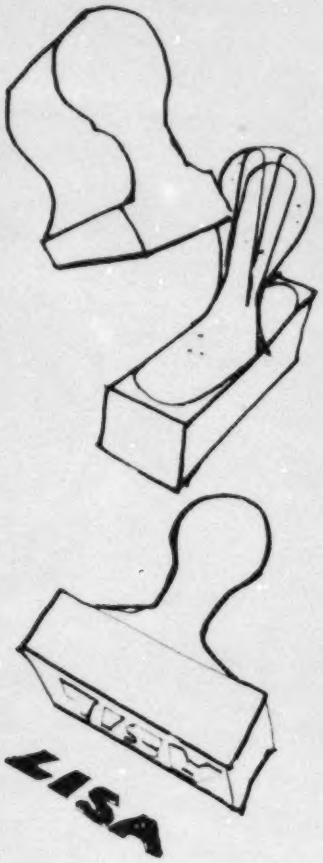
Use a ruler and compass to create interesting geometric designs on the paper.

Draw pictures of an event in the corners and borders of the page. Or make a full-page drawing with light-colored felt-tip pens, colored pencils, or water colors. Then write your letter in bold and dark handwriting on top of your artwork.

Illustrate your letter by pasting or taping on snapshots. Photographs help friends and relatives share in your experiences, even when they're far away. Perhaps you have a new baby sister or brother, or maybe you could include a picture of yourself while on vacation. If you are making up a story in your letter, have some friends pose as characters and take their picture. Or take a photograph of a place that reminds you of the setting of your story.



Collect different kinds of writing tools: ball-point pens, fountain pens, artists' pens, felt-tip pens, crayons, colored pencils. Each of these tools will give your writing a different look. Experiment to add uniqueness to your letters. Instead of doing your writing in everyday loops and scrawls, practice writing with different styles of alphabets and lettering. A book on calligraphy, which means beautiful writing, will show you decorative letters that you can copy. Or make up your own letters to fit your mood.



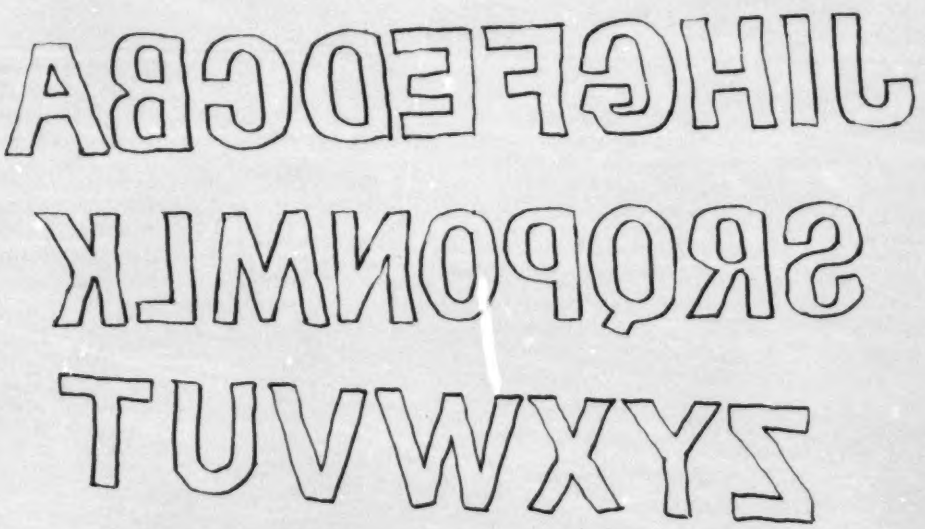
If you write a lot of letters, you may want to create letterhead stationery with your name and return address printed on the paper and the envelopes. The simplest way to do this is to order a rubber stamp containing your name and address.

Pat Person
2222 John Doe St.
Lansing, MI 48910

You can stamp your name on envelopes and sheets of paper of all different shapes, sizes, and colors. Stamp pads come in different colors, so you can print your name in different colors too.

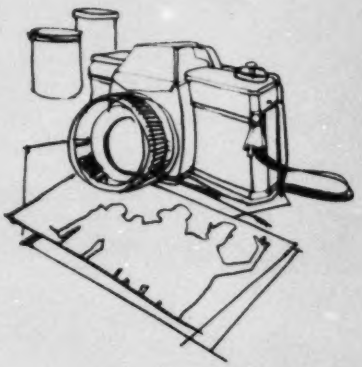
Or you can use a printing set from a hobby store to make your own stamp. Spell out your name and address with the rubber letters and fit them into the wood block. You might want to add a slogan or motto following your name.

Another choice is to design printed letterhead stationery. It is a bit more expensive, but it will look very professional. At an art supply store buy some "dry transfer" lettering in a style you like. These letters can be rubbed off onto a sheet of paper. Follow the instructions on the packet and rub off your name and address wherever you want them on the page. If you like, you can also draw a symbol or emblem or place decorative borders on the paper. Take this master copy to a quick printing shop. Your printer will help you select an attractive style of paper and will print from your master copy. Keep in mind, though, that you may have to order fifty or one hundred copies.



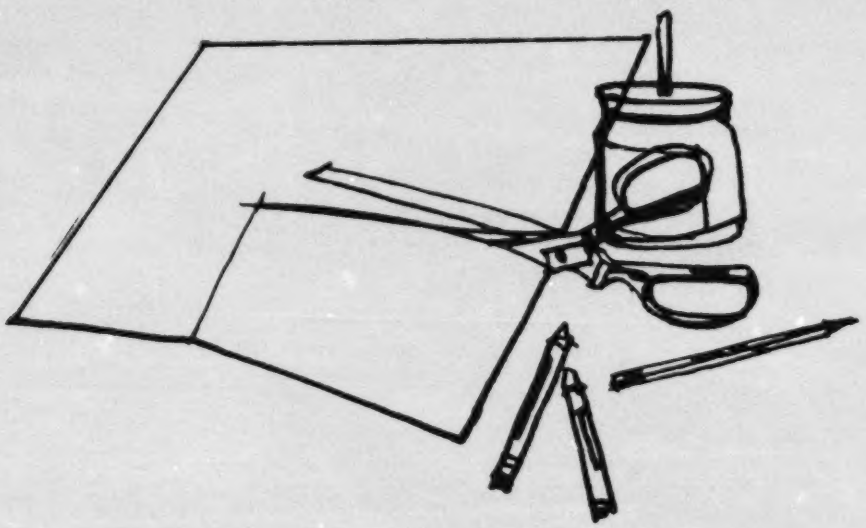
Postcards

Postcards are the easy way to order a catalog or to send a brief note instead of a letter. With picture postcards you can show your friends the sights you saw on your vacation, or you can introduce your pen pal to your hometown. You can purchase postcards of state and national parks, historic sites, and large cities, and often you can find cards of your hometown.



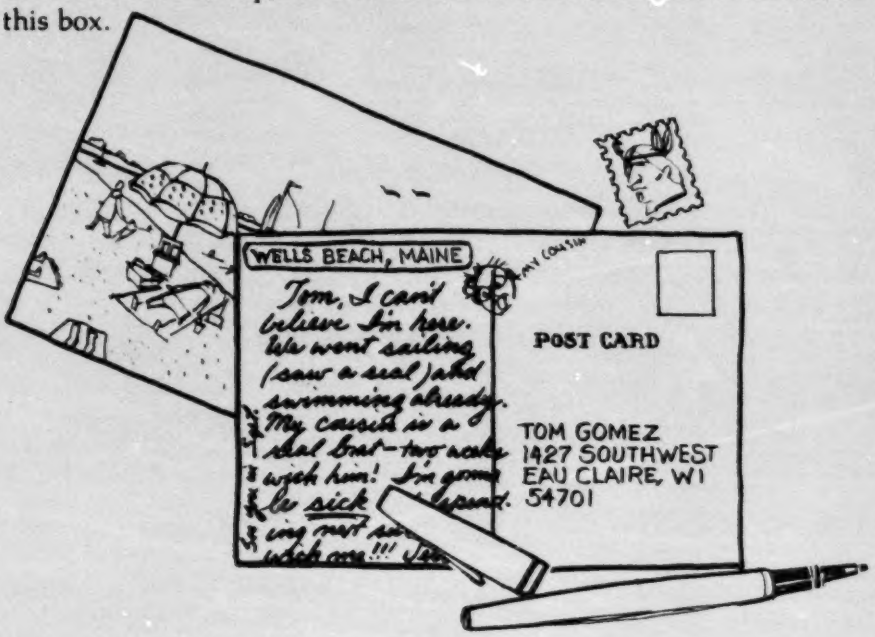
If you or someone in your family is a photographer, you can make your own picture postcards. Select pictures of yourself, your family, your friends, or your favorite places or events. Your film developer will print the picture on one side, with places on the other side for your message and for the name, address, and stamp.

Another way to make personal postcards is to illustrate the postal cards you buy at the post office. Add borders or decorations on the message side with different colored pens, pencils, paints, or crayons.



You can also make your postcards from scratch. With a sheet of heavy paper or light cardboard, cut rectangles that measure 3½ × 5 inches—this is the standard size of postcard that meets Postal Service regulations. On one side, draw a box in the upper right corner and plan to stick your stamp here. Leave the rest of this side blank for the name and address, then write your message on the other side. Use felt-tip pens, ball-point pens, pencils, crayons, or paint to decorate your card.

If you want a drawing or design to cover all of one side of your homemade postcard, follow the format of a purchased picture postcard. Divide the address side of the postcard in half. Put your message on the left side of the card. Draw a box in the upper right corner for the stamp, then write the name and address underneath this box.

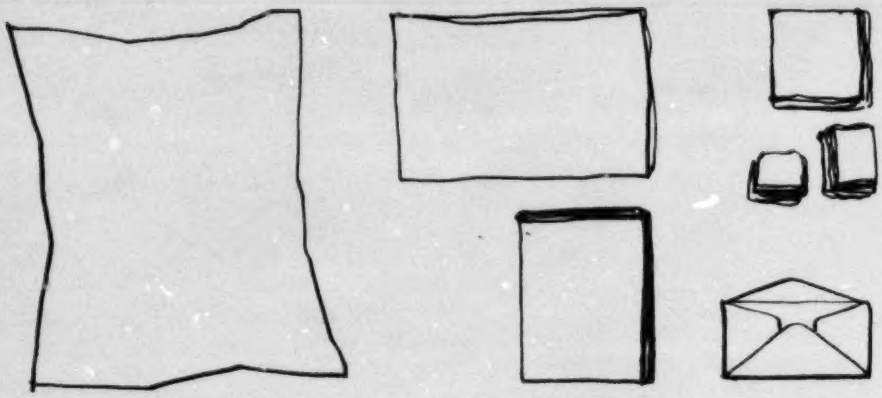


Greeting Cards

Sometimes stationery stores stock row after row of greeting cards, but the message inside is not what you want to say. Why not design the card yourself and write your own message?

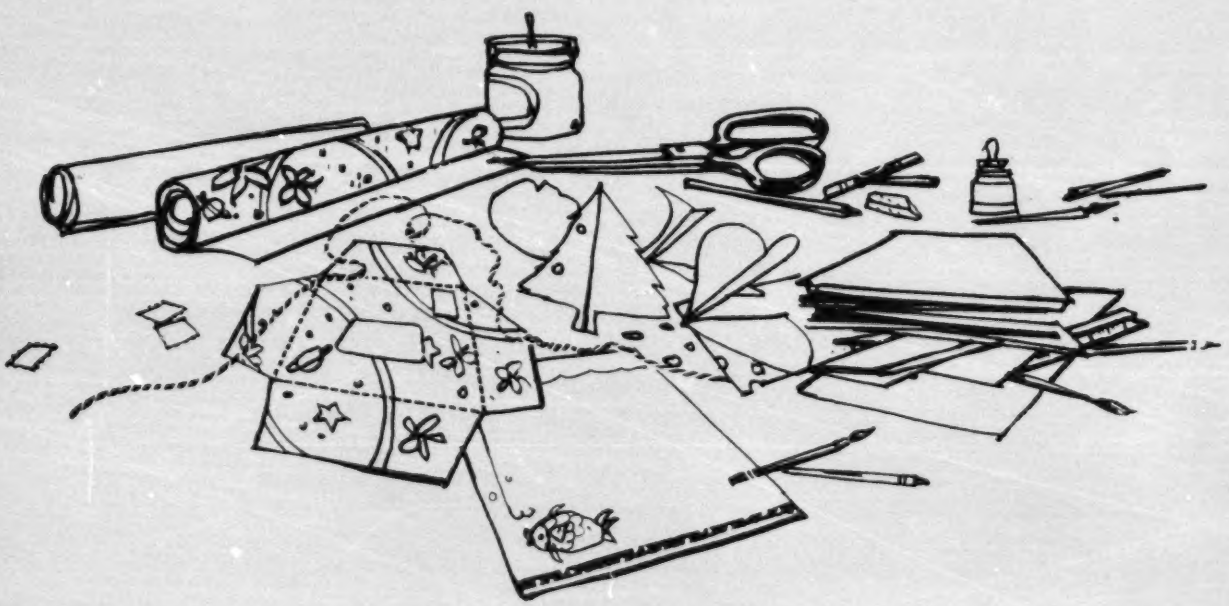
Most greeting cards are made by folding a sheet of paper in half and placing this fold at the top or on the left side of the card. To make a more unusual card, cut the unfolded edges of the paper to create a special shape—an animal, a sunburst, a birthday cake, a pumpkin, a rainbow. Choose the shape to fit the occasion.

You might want to tape two or three sheets of paper together, end to end. Starting at one end, fold the paper over and under like an accordian until you reach the opposite end. This card unfolds to deliver one long message or several shorter ones. Another unusual card starts with a large sheet of paper that is folded in half over and over again. A different message can be put inside each folded section.



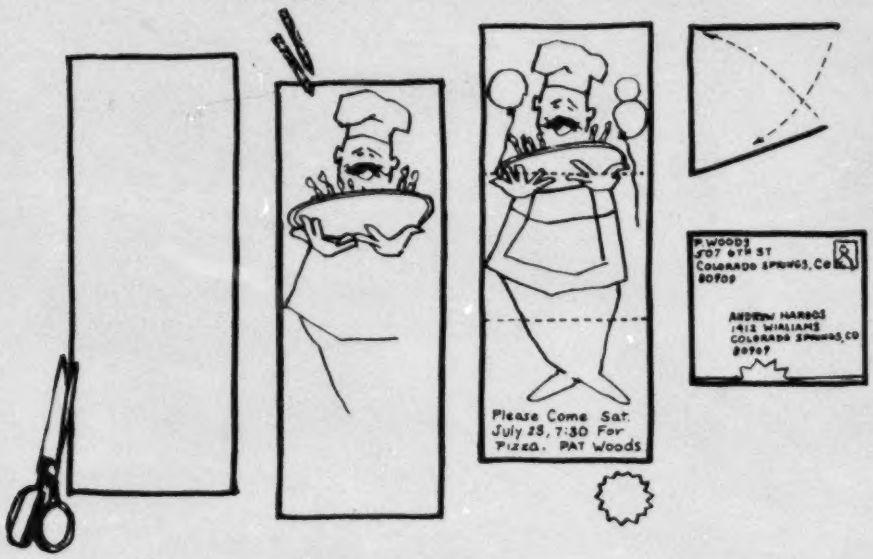
After you cut and fold your card, make sure it's a little smaller than its envelope so that the card slips neatly inside. Stationery stores sell envelopes in a variety of sizes, or you can make your own envelope to match your card. Remember that the Postal Service has standard envelope sizes for their machines that sort the mail. An unusual size of envelope may look perfect on the gift you carry to a party, but it may not be the right size for mailing. Your cards and envelopes should be no smaller than 3½ × 5 inches and no larger than 6⅛ × 11½ inches.

Use your imagination to illustrate the cover and inside of your greeting card. Felt-tip pens, crayons, colored pencils, or paint will make a colorful design, or do your artwork in ink alone. You can capture the spirit of a holiday in your illustration, or you can create a pleasant scene or design.

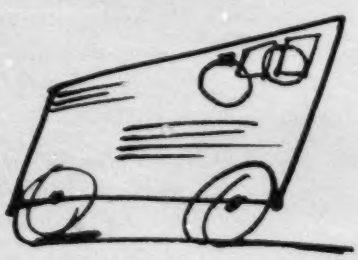


If you feel uncomfortable doing your own drawing, find objects in your home to trace around, then color or decorate them. Or trace a drawing from a book. Use stickers on your cover, either alone or with a simple design that you draw. Cut pictures from magazines or newspapers, or illustrate your greeting card with photographs.

Inside, use ink, a pencil, a felt-tip pen, or paint for the greeting. Use your best printing, or try unusual or decorative lettering. Or piece together your greeting from words and letters cut from magazines or newspapers.

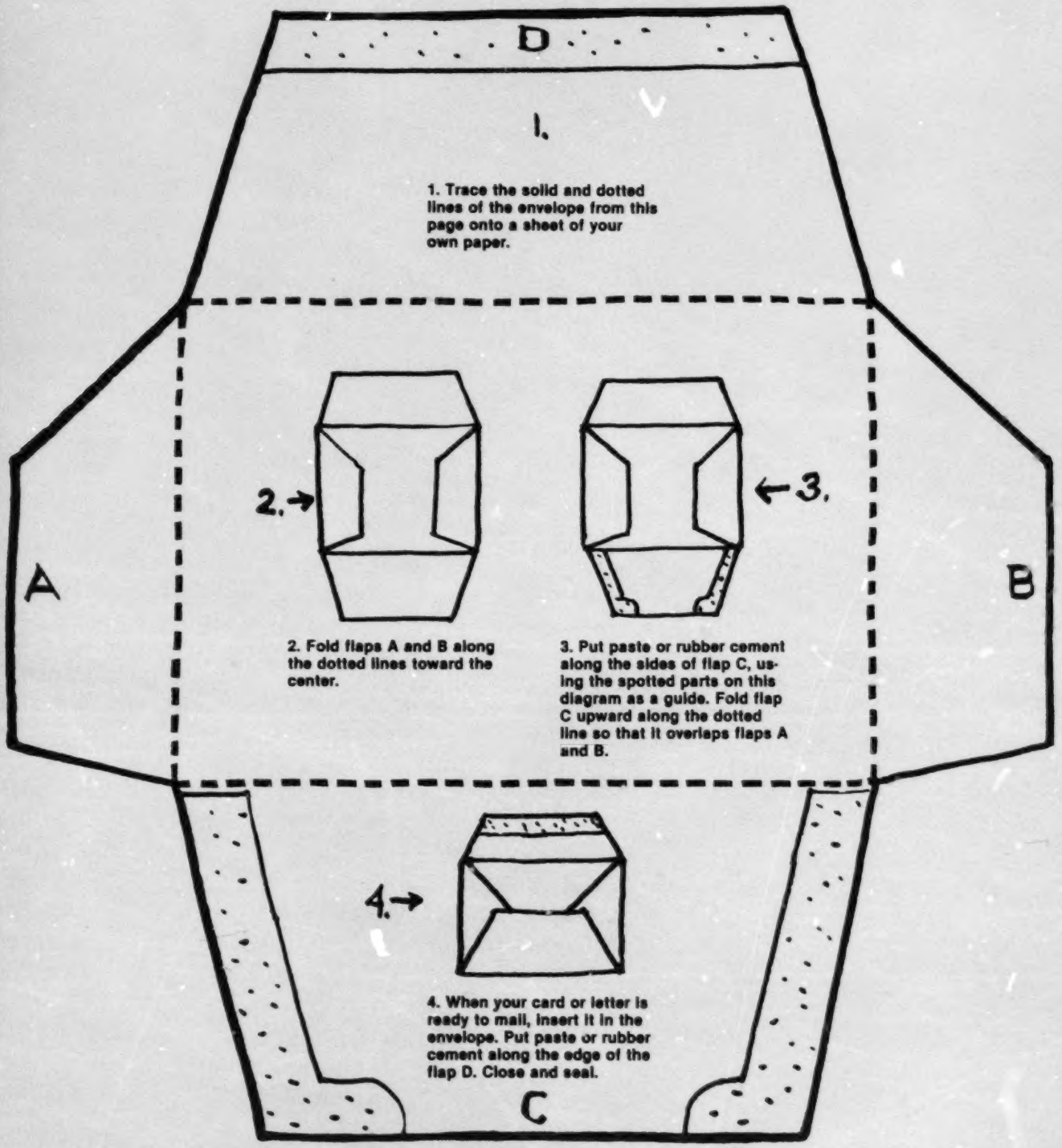


The occasion for the greeting card will influence your message, but the style is up to you alone. Birthday greetings can be humorous or can convey sincere wishes for a pleasant day. Religious holidays usually call for a serious message, while many Halloween cards try to be frightening. You can jot down a brief and to-the-point message, write a poem, or fill the inside of your card with a long and friendly note. Whatever your message, your greeting card will be personal and special.



Envelopes

Did you ever make an envelope? It isn't hard. Below is one way to do it.


D
1.
1. Trace the solid and dotted lines of the envelope from this page onto a sheet of your own paper.
2.
2. Fold flaps A and B along the dotted lines toward the center.
3.
3. Put paste or rubber cement along the sides of flap C, using the spotted parts on this diagram as a guide. Fold flap C upward along the dotted line so that it overlaps flaps A and B.
A
B
4.
4. When your card or letter is ready to mail, insert it in the envelope. Put paste or rubber cement along the edge of the flap D. Close and seal.
C

Fun with Letters

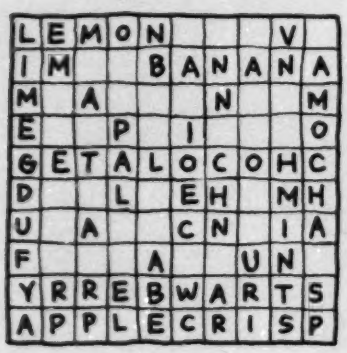
What are the easiest letters to write? The ones you write for fun. Who should receive them? Anybody. There's no trick to this kind of letter. You may not be able to put a genie in a bottle, but you can put a lot of yourself into an envelope! Here are some ways to squeeze inside and surprise your reader. You and your friends will think of many others.

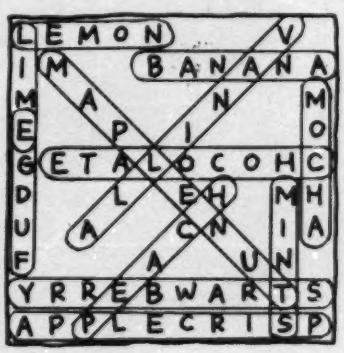
Games and Puzzles

Do you have a granddad, a favorite uncle, or a special friend in another city with whom you'd like to play chess? Use the postal system! Each of you sets up a chessboard at home. Then one of you makes the first move and mails it to the other. You can simply list which piece you are moving and to which square, or you can record the move on a paper chessboard that you mail back and forth. Keep your chessboard up to date, following your opponent's moves and plotting your own.

You might try playing checkers or tic-tac-toe by mail. Are there other games you could play?

Do you have a friend or relative who would like to play word-search with you? Draw a box that is ten squares across by ten squares up and down. Pick a topic—anything from ice-cream flavors to the names of your relatives—and make a list of words that fit that topic. Print letters in the squares to spell out the words on your list. The words can run forwards, backwards, up and down, or on a diagonal. Words can even overlap each other. Like this:





Did you find vanilla, maplenut, mint, peach, and banana?

When you have all your words in the puzzle box, circle them and fill in the empty squares with other letters. Keep this puzzle as an answer key.

Now draw a second puzzle box. Copy in all the letters, but don't circle the words. Send your friend this puzzle box and a list of the words you've put into it. How many can your friend spot? To make the puzzle more difficult, merely tell your friend to look for, say, fifteen flavors of ice cream. Don't send your list of words or the answer key until your next letter.

Riddles can also be shared with friends by mail. Find them in books or make up your own. Don't give away the answers—have your friend try to solve them and write back to you. Maybe your friend will send you some riddles to solve.

Here are a few riddles about letter writing to start you off:

Why is an envelope with a letter inside like a watermelon?

In what two keys does a letter carrier whistle when walking on an icy sidewalk?

My sister's nickname is Postscript. What is her real name?

What did John write his mother that caused her to send him three socks?

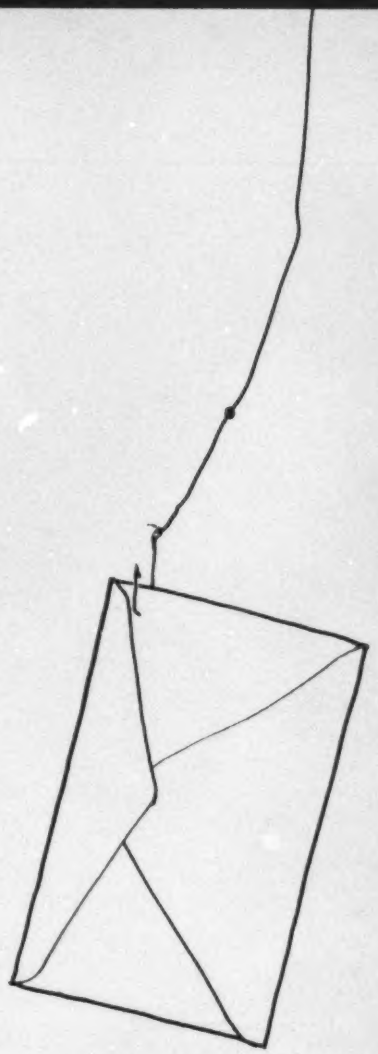
What letter is never found in the alphabet?

Why are fishermen good correspondents?

If a pencil and a piece of paper had a race, who would win?

Five letter carriers are standing under one umbrella but none are getting wet. Why not?

Why is a letter like perfume?



Here are the answers. How many did you guess?

Because what's inside is bound to be read (red).

C sharp or B flat.

Adaline Moore (add a line more).

Dear Mom, I've grown another foot.

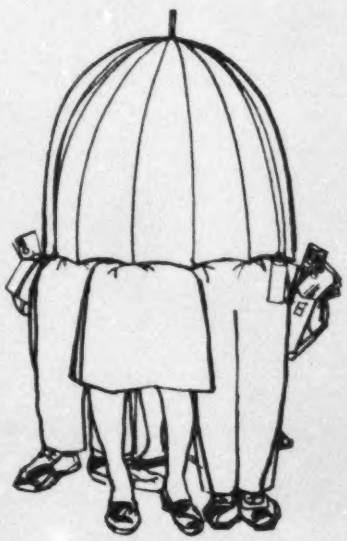
The one you mail.

Because they're always dropping a line.

The pencil because the paper always remains stationery (-ary).

It isn't raining.

Both are sent (scent).



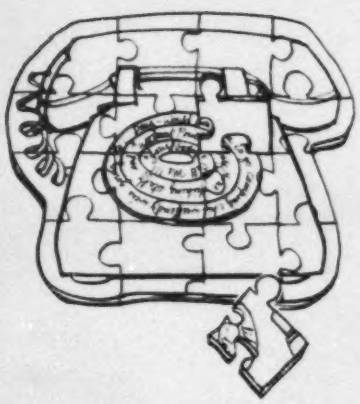
Sometimes it's fun to send along a brain-teaser. The teaser you send may keep you in your friend's mind all week! Begin with fairly easy teasers like this one.

> Two people are in the post office to mail their holiday cards and packages. One spends ten dollars more than the other. Together they spend forty dollars. How much did each one spend?
> One spent fifteen dollars, the other twenty-five.

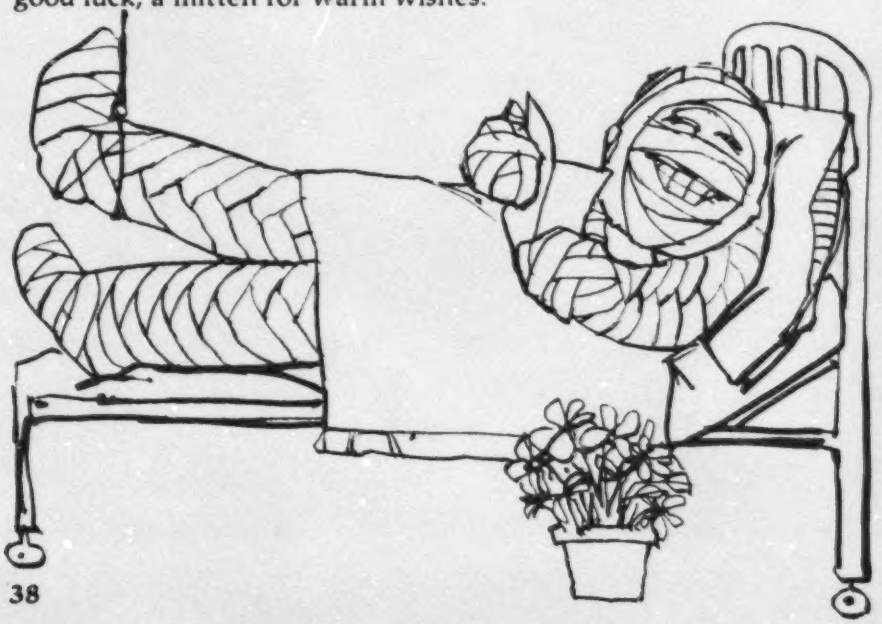
Here's a teaser that's a little bit tougher.

> Can you arrange eight 8's in a column so that they will add up to 1000?

$$\begin{array}{r} 888 \\ 88 \\ 8 \\ 8 \\ 8 \\ \hline 1000 \end{array}$$



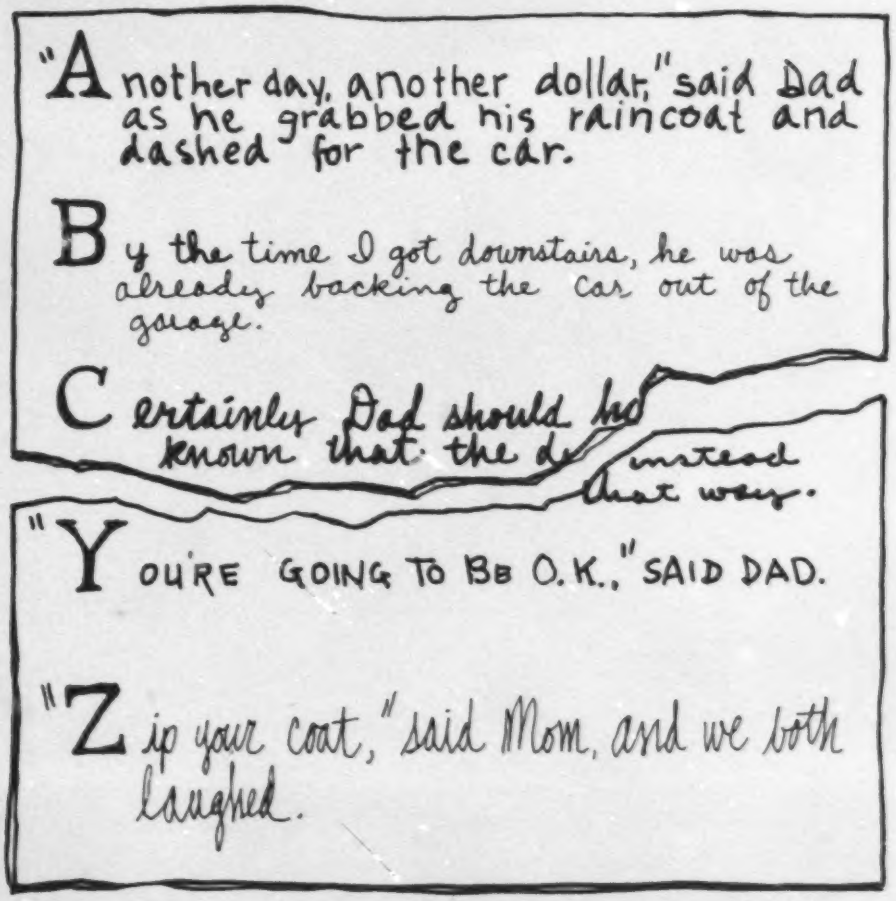
Instead of sending a puzzle *with* your letter, turn your letter *into* a puzzle. Write your letter on a piece of lightweight cardboard. Write on only one side. Then cut your letter apart like a jigsaw puzzle and put the pieces into the envelope. A friend in the hospital or stuck in bed at home will especially enjoy puzzling over your letter. If you like, cut the piece of cardboard into a special shape before writing your letter—a heart for love, a four-leaf clover for good luck, a mitten for warm wishes.



Stories and Poems

Have you ever tried writing a story with an out-of-town friend or one who's away for the summer vacation? Write and mail the first paragraph and ask your friend to write the second and mail both paragraphs back to you. You'll be surprised at the new characters that appear and the unexpected turns the plot takes. The two of you can write an exciting adventure story or a suspenseful mystery. Or base the story on events and people in your hometowns and include yourselves in the plot.

It's not as simple as ABC to write an alphabet chain story, but it is a lot of fun for you and a letter-writing partner. Send along with your letter sheets of paper on which you have printed in bold capitals the letters of the alphabet. Leave three or four lines between each letter. Begin a story by writing a sentence that starts with the capital A. Send the sheet to your friend who then writes the second line of the story, a sentence beginning with the capital B. Keep the alphabet chain going. The story should make sense—or nonsense—but try to come up with an ending for your story as you approach X, Y, and Z. Like this:

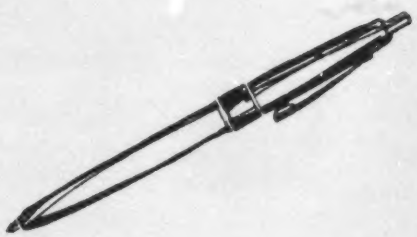

"Another day, another dollar," said Dad as he grabbed his raincoat and dashed for the car.
By the time I got downstairs, he was already backing the car out of the garage.
Certainly Dad should have known that the de instead that way.
"YOU'RE GOING TO BE O.K.," SAID DAD.
"Zip your coat," said Mom, and we both laughed.

Recycle the advertising circulars and catalogs that are mailed to your house as nifty poems for your bedroom bulletin board or to send to favorite friends. Read through an insurance sales letter, a car ad, a department store circular to spot a series of related words that you can use in a new way. Some people call these "found" poems. It's fun to cut out these words or even individual letters in different type sizes and styles and arrange them on the page to make your poem communicate in two ways—to be seen and to be heard. Like this poem "found" in an October sales brochure for home furnishings.

Any pal or relative would be flattered to receive a poem that you created from a letter he or she had sent to you. There's no need to cut up your friend's letter. Merely copy the "found" poem and send it back, explaining where it came from. It's legal to use the same word more than once. Here's a poem one sixth-grader "found" in a letter from a classmate who had moved away.

Two good friends
Take away one—
Two lonely people.

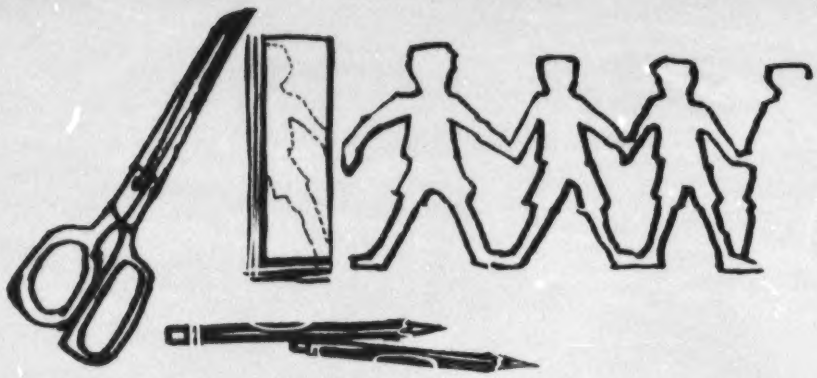
Two lonely people
One super letter—
Two good friends.



Letters from Two, Three, Four, and More

Two heads—and pencils—are sometimes better than one. Try writing letters with several friends or with your brothers and sisters. Team writing is especially welcomed by a school friend or cousin who has moved to another city or state. Pick a time—the school lunch period perhaps—when three or four of you can sit down together and write to your absent friend. In only a few minutes you'll have a long and newsy letter to send. And your friend will feel special knowing that all of you were thinking about him or her at the very same time.

You might like to send your group greeting in a way that shows togetherness. Cut a chain of identical paper dolls by pleat-folding an unlined sheet of paper, sketching half the figure, and cutting along the sketch lines. Like this:



Cut enough paper dolls so that each person contributing to the letter is represented. Each of you then colors your doll, using your own hair and eye coloring and drawing in the clothes you're wearing. On the reverse side, write your own special message to the absent friend. Paper dolls are another way to put yourself in an envelope.

Chains can be made to fit the holidays, too. If there are five of you in your family, try a five-heart valentine to your grandparents—love and a heart full of words from each of you. Stars, pumpkins, bells, Easter eggs are other chain ideas.

Photo mobiles are another way to send a group greeting to a friend. Use school pictures, or have someone take a picture of each member of the group busy at a favorite activity. Glue or paste your picture onto a sheet of brightly colored paper that you've cut into a shape to match your mood or your activity. If you're pictured playing baseball, paste your photo onto the outline of a catcher's mitt. Draw in the stitching lines and creases to make it more authentic. If you're a piano player, place your picture on the outline of a piano keyboard or on a cluster of musical notes.

On the reverse side of your cut-out, write a note to your friend. Attach string to each picture, then join the strings together to form a mobile. When your mobile is hung, you'll all be smiling down at your friend.

You and your friends can also have fun getting together and creating fill-in-the-blank letters for school friends who have moved away. Imitate the test tactics of your teachers: fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice, and true or false questions. Ask your absent friend about new teachers, the school lunch menu, favorite records or television programs, the new house or apartment, and the new neighborhood. Your friend answers the questions right on your letter and sends it back for old friends to share. Be sure to leave plenty of space for your friend to add notes. And if you offer multiple choice a, b, c, and d, sometimes add e with a blank so your friend will have a chance to surprise you with an answer you might not have expected.

Art in an Envelope

Would you like to send a relative your picture and a letter at the same time? You don't need a camera for this one. Sit sideways next to a wall with a strong light shining directly at you. Have someone trace the shadow of your profile onto a piece of paper. Be sure to include your neck or you won't be satisfied with your silhouette. You can use white or black paper (trace with a pencil so the line will show) and cut out the silhouette.

Now add your letter to the back of your picture. If you decided on black paper, write your letter on white paper and paste it to the back of the silhouette. What relative wouldn't like getting you in the envelope along with your letter!

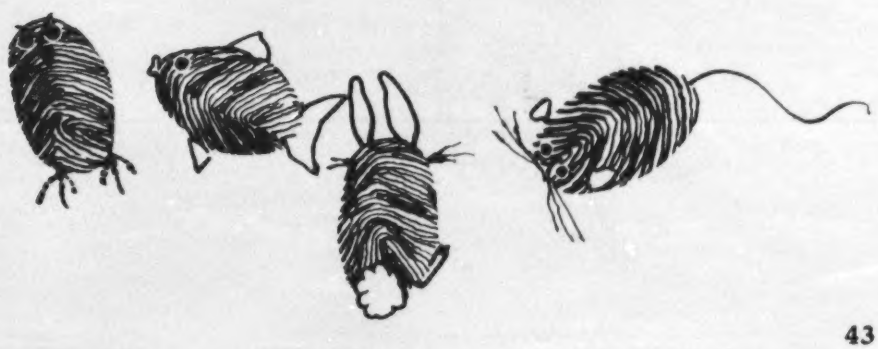
Another cut-out letter that's fun to make and fun to get is the spiral snake. Begin by drawing a spiral on a fairly stiff sheet of paper.

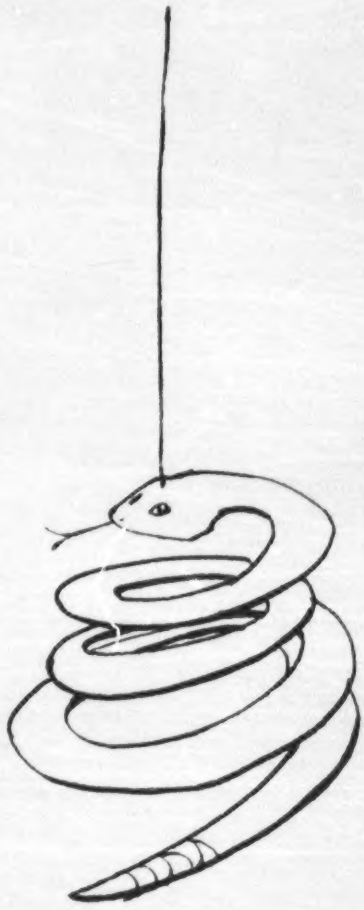
Now, beginning at the center of the spiral, write your message. Keep within the spiral track you drew. Cut along the spiral line to bring your snake to life. Add eyes and a forked tongue and a piece of string as shown below so your snake can slither and slide.

To mail your letter, lay the spiral flat on a blank sheet of paper. Fold the paper into thirds and put it (snake inside) into a business-sized envelope.

Your silhouette was one way to put part of you in an envelope; here's another. Use a thumbprint or fingerprint as a special part of your signature on your notes and letters. You'll need an ink pad and a felt-tip pen.

To make a fingerprint, place the tip of your finger on the ink pad. Then bring your finger down to the first joint. Now press the tip of your finger on the paper, and then the rest of your finger without lifting it from the paper.





When the print is dry, add lines with the felt-tip pen to make an animal symbol to use as a sign-off: an owl on a branch, a fish from a sideways print, a mouse with long whiskers and a very long tail, a rabbit—front or back view. Ostriches, moose, cats, porcupines, pigs, lobsters—almost any creature is hidden in your fingerprint.

Writing without a Pen

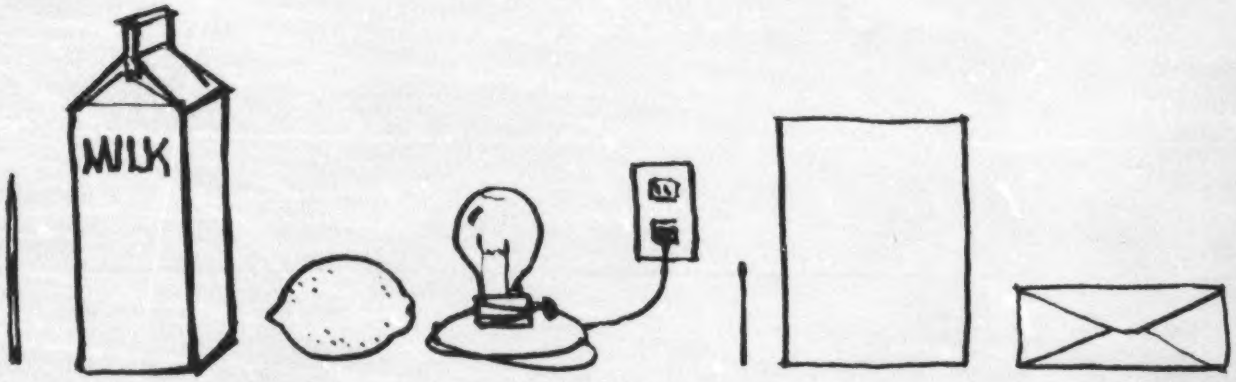
Secret agents write letters to each other with invisible ink. Have you ever tried it? It's easy to do. You probably have the two most common secret inks in your family kitchen—lemon juice and milk.

First prepare a special pen to write with. You can use a wooden toothpick or a sharp stick. Or get a parent's permission to whittle the end of a wooden matchstick to a point.

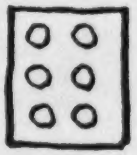
Pour a small amount of lemon juice or milk into a bowl. Dip the toothpick or stick into the liquid, then write out your message. Whenever your "pen" runs out of ink, dip it back into the liquid. You can see your message as you write, but it will disappear as soon as it is dry.

To make the letter reappear, hold the paper close to an electric light bulb. Or if you are allowed to use the iron, carefully press the paper with a warm iron. When the paper gets warm, the words will turn brown. Letters written with lemon juice may turn a darker brown, but both inks will work.

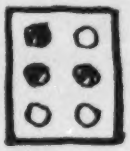
No one will be able to read your letter until you share the special directions to bring back your words.



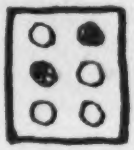
In 1824, a Frenchman, Louis Braille, invented the most famous way of writing without a pen—braille. Now the official international system of writing for blind people, braille is touch reading and writing. Raised dots represent the letters of the alphabet, numbers, and even punctuation marks. By arranging the dots in a six-dot cell in various combinations, sixty-three different patterns are possible. These are the patterns that represent the letters, numbers, and punctuation marks. Your library can supply you with a card that shows the entire braille system.

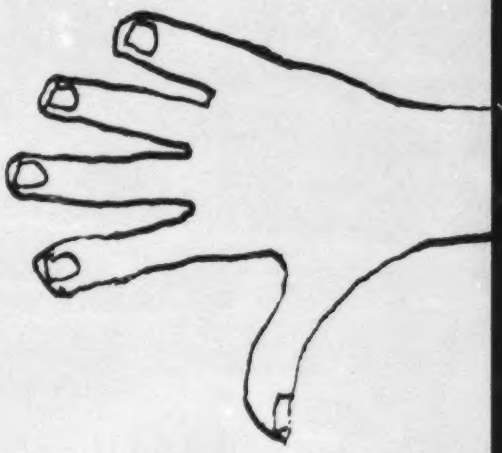


Here, for example, is the braille pattern for the letter H:



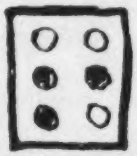
Here is the pattern for the letter I:



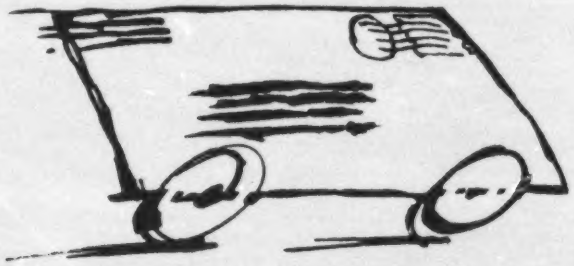


Now you can write one word to a blind friend: Hi.

And here's the exclamation point to finish it off:



If you master the system, you can use it for secret correspondence with sighted friends. Use a pencil point to poke dots in a sheet of paper. Learning braille will enable you to understand the skill and speed of blind readers—and, most importantly, your knowledge of braille may gain a new and special friend for you.



Writing with Others

Have you ever been a scribe? Do you have a friend who is physically handicapped or who is sidelined with a broken arm? Take along a pad of paper when you visit and jot down the letters your friend would like to write. Writing letters for others may be one of the most rewarding kinds of letter writing you can do.

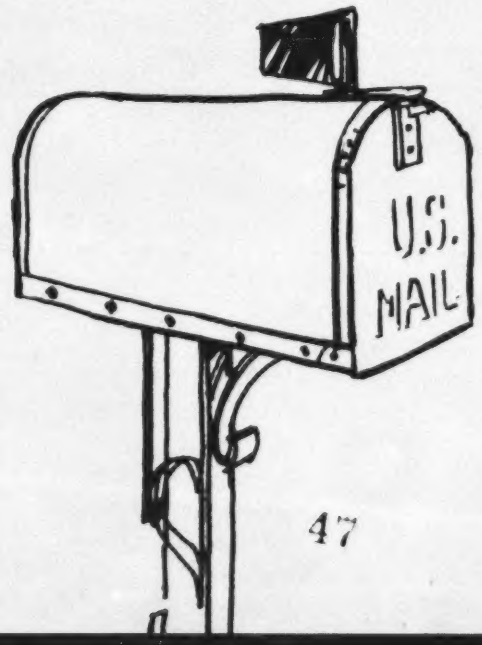
Perhaps your class could write letters as a group for children in a nursery school or kindergarten class. You might plan your visit right before Mother's Day and help the children prepare cards for their mothers.

Do you know an elderly person who likes to write letters but who gets tired out doing the writing? You could become that person's scribe.

Your scout troop might visit a nursing home to help the elderly with their letter writing. Visit at holiday times, when they may have many letters and cards to send. You might bring along card-making supplies so that everyone can make cards. The scribes can write down the messages and address the envelopes.

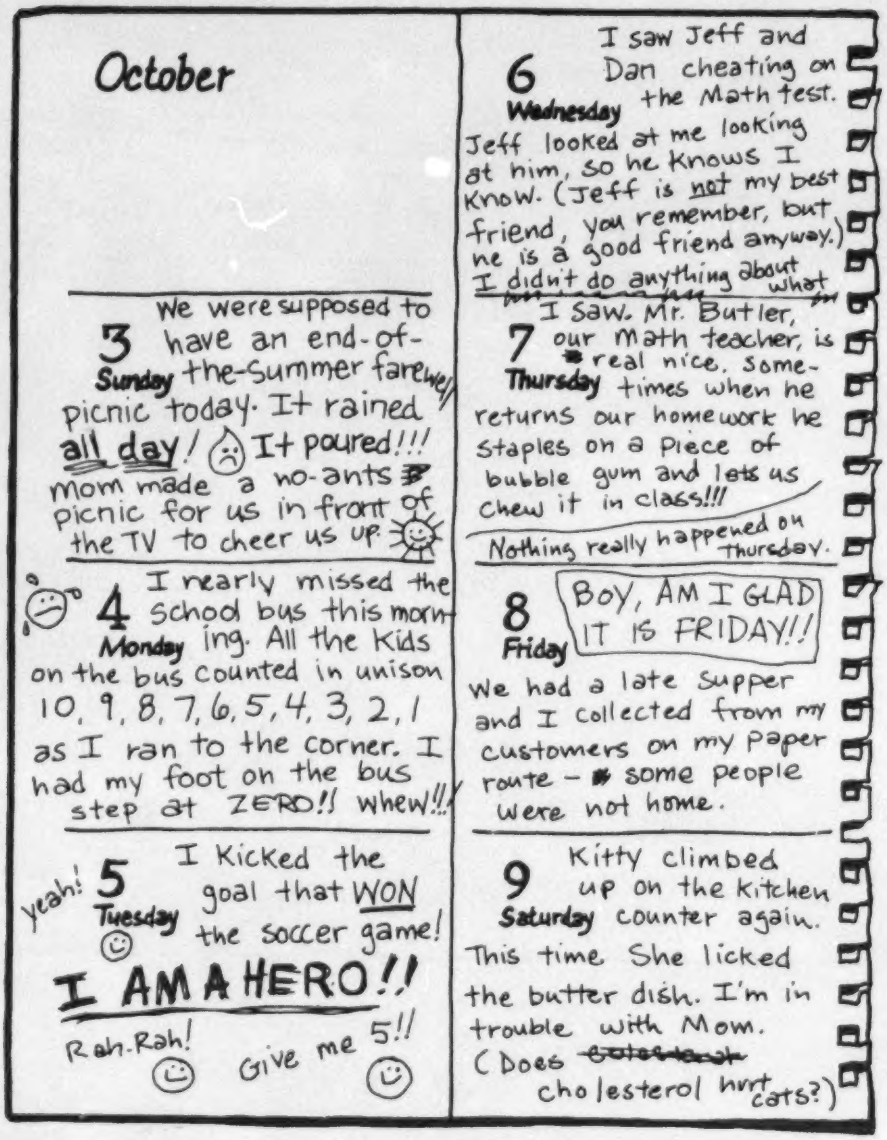
Have you heard or read about extra-sensory perception (ESP)? You may not have ESP, but it's exciting and almost a little scary to arrange with a nearby or faraway friend to write to each other at exactly the same time on an agreed-upon day. Keep your promise!

At the very minute you've agreed upon (allow for time zone changes if you're really far from each other), go to your room or other quiet place. Concentrate on your friend as your friend concentrates on you and write your same-time letters. When the letters are delivered, you may discover that you wrote about similar things or very different ones. No matter what the topics, this letter will have its own kind of magic.

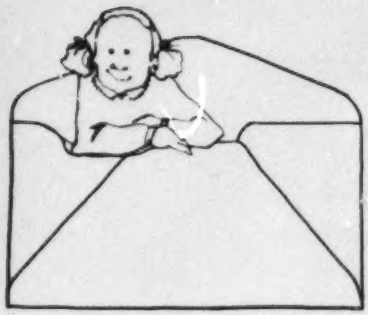


Diary Letters

Do you have a special friend or relative with whom you'd like to share a diary? You can do this by mail. Take a page from a printed calendar, or divide a piece of paper into seven boxes, one for each day of the week. You can also make a diary for the whole month by using a page from a large wall calendar. Find a few minutes each day to jot down what happened that day. If you fill a box every day, at the end of the week you'll have an instant letter like this one from a boy out on the Illinois prairie.


October
3 Sunday
We were supposed to have an end-of-the-Summer farewell picnic today. It rained all day! It poured!!! Mom made a no-ants picnic for us in front of the TV to cheer us up.
4 Monday
I nearly missed the school bus this morning. All the kids on the bus counted in unison 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 as I ran to the corner. I had my foot on the bus step at ZERO!! whew!!!
5 Tuesday
yeah!
I kicked the goal that WON the soccer game!
I AM A HERO!!
Rah-Rah!
Give me 5!!
6 Wednesday
I saw Jeff and Dan cheating on the Math test. Jeff looked at me looking at him, so he knows I know. (Jeff is not my best friend, you remember, but he is a good friend anyway.) I didn't do anything about what I saw.
7 Thursday
Mr. Butler, our math teacher, is real nice. Sometimes when he returns our homework he staples on a piece of bubble gum and lets us chew it in class!!!
Nothing really happened on Thursday.
8 Friday
BOY, AM I GLAD IT IS FRIDAY!!
We had a late supper and I collected from my customers on my paper route – some people were not home.
9 Saturday
Kitty climbed up on the kitchen counter again. This time She licked the butter dish. I'm in trouble with Mom. (Does ~~cotesterol~~ cholesterol hurt cats?)

At the end of the week or month, mail your calendar letter to your friend or relative. You can do all the diary writing, or you can trade off writing at the end of each week or month. Or perhaps you'd both like to share and compare calendar pages through the mail.



Have you ever thought that you might deserve a letter from yourself? Pick a day that is special for you. It can be your birthday, but if that's a busy day crowded with friends and family, pick another, more private day. Make it special by giving it your own special code number—the tenth day of the tenth month (October), for example, because you are ten. Then sit right down and write yourself a letter—a serious letter in which you honestly record how you feel about yourself, your parents, school. What you like about people—including yourself—and what you don't like. What's right with the world and what's wrong. What you want to do with your life when you grow up. Put the letter in an envelope and tuck it away in a special place. Now don't open it until the tenth day of the tenth month rolls around again. Seal the letter so you won't be tempted to peek during the year.

When it's once again October tenth, open your letter and reread it. Think about how you felt then and how you feel now. Have you grown in more ways than inches? Did you get smaller in any way during the year? Now, write, seal, and tuck away a second ten/ten letter. Keep each of your yearly letters. You'll enjoy rereading them, and someday you may have a son and daughter with whom to share these growing-up letters. Wouldn't that be a great way to let them know how much you care about them?

Collector's Corner

Have you ever taken a good long look at the postage stamp on your letter? Have you ever saved a stamp because it pictures a person you admire or a place you've visited? Many people collect stamps. In fact, there are 22 million stamp collectors in the United States alone.

There are no rules and no age limits for stamp collecting. You can work alone, or you can turn your hobby into a family project. Start your collection now, and watch it grow through the years.

It's easy to become a stamp collector. You can start by saving the stamps on mail delivered to your home. Ask friends, relatives, and neighbors to save stamps for you. See how many different stamps you can gather in your first week.

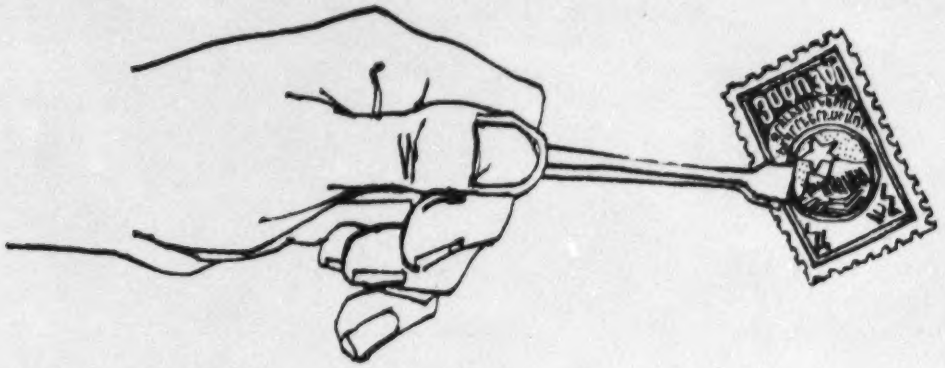
After a while you may want to buy some stamps. Look in your local newspaper or telephone book for the name of a stamp dealer near your home. Most stamp dealers will be glad to talk to you and help you with your collection.

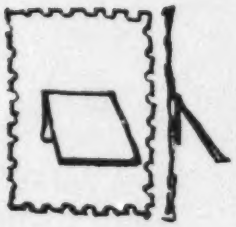
You can buy unused U.S. stamps at the post office. Only the stamps now being used for postage are available. There are also many companies that sell stamps by mail. You can probably find an advertisement for one in a popular magazine or newspaper.

You'll want to remove any scraps of envelope from the stamps you save. Carefully soak the envelopes by placing them in cool or warm water, never hot, until the stamps peel away easily. Remove them from the water. Put the wet stamps between blotters or paper towels. Place a book on top so the stamps won't curl as they dry.

50

You can keep your stamps in envelopes or boxes for a while, but eventually you'll want to display them in an album. You can make a stamp album from a looseleaf notebook and paper. Arrange your stamps by country or by subject. Or you can buy an album from a stamp dealer or hobby store. Many albums picture the most common stamps. When you find a stamp that is pictured in your album, mount the stamp on top of its picture. Other albums contain no photographs, so the arrangement of stamps is up to you.

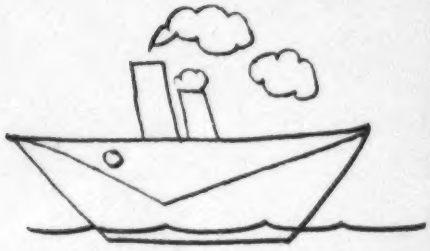




Mount each stamp with a small gummed paper called a stamp hinge. Part of the hinge sticks to the stamp and part to the album page, so the stamp is not damaged. For further protection, use stamp tongs, which look like tweezers, whenever you handle dry stamps. When the stamps are wet, use your fingers instead.

Do you know that every stamp has a story to tell? Commemorative stamps are the best storytellers. They are issued to celebrate great events, causes, cultural milestones, or individuals important to our country's history. Commemoratives are usually larger and more colorful than the regular (or definitive) stamps and are only available for a limited time.

The first set of U.S. commemoratives featured Christopher Columbus and the discovery of America. They were issued in 1893.



Since that time commemorative stamps have honored the American Red Cross, antique cars, Indian art, the Olympics, state flags, horse racing, and even stamp collecting.

With commemoratives, you can organize your stamp collection by topic. Pick wildlife, for example, then look for stamps of bears, badgers, buffaloes, bison, and birds. Or choose sports, music, ships, or space exploration. The Postal Service issues about thirty new stamps each year, so you'll have many topics to choose from.

See how many different countries you can collect stamps from. Ask friends and relatives to send you a letter or postcard when they travel. Do you have a pen pal in another country? Stamps from foreign countries can be difficult to identify. You probably recognize that *Polska* is Poland and *Island* is Iceland. Would you spot *Sverige* as coming from Sweden or *Magyar Posta* from Hungary? Look in your album for a list of the most common words or symbols to look for when identifying foreign stamps.

Join your school stamp club. If there isn't one, ask your teacher if you can form one. You'll have fun trading your duplicates to your friends for stamps showing your favorite subject or stamps from a

foreign country you're interested in. You can plan exhibits of club members' collections, invite guest speakers, or show films. Or how about stamp quiz shows with questions on stamps and collecting?

The U.S. Postal Service has a stamp club program for students in third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh grades. Members receive a monthly newsletter, a wallet I.D. card, a membership certificate, and other stamp club materials. The clubs are named in honor of Benjamin Franklin, the first Postmaster General of this country. Your teacher can get more information about Benjamin Franklin Stamp Clubs by contacting your local postmaster.

A Benjamin Franklin Stamp Club Pen Pal Program has been started by the Postal Service. Interested stamp club members will be able to exchange club ideas and stamp collecting experiences. For more information, write to

Benjamin Franklin Stamp Club
"Pen Pal"
Washington, DC 20260-6355

Include your club identification number and the states where you'd like to correspond with other club members.

Are you interested in other kinds of postal collections? Some people like to collect their stamps on the very first day they are issued. You can do this by sending a self-addressed envelope and

the cost of the stamp to the postmaster of the town issuing the stamp. Usually the town has some connection to the person or event being celebrated by the stamp. When the stamp goes on sale, the postmaster places the stamp on your self-addressed envelope, cancels it with a special "First Day of Issue" postmark, and mails the envelope (called the first day cover) back to you. A specially designed envelope may be availiable from your stamp dealer, or you can decorate the envelope with artwork about the new stamp. That way you'll have preserved a little bit of history—and a little bit of you.

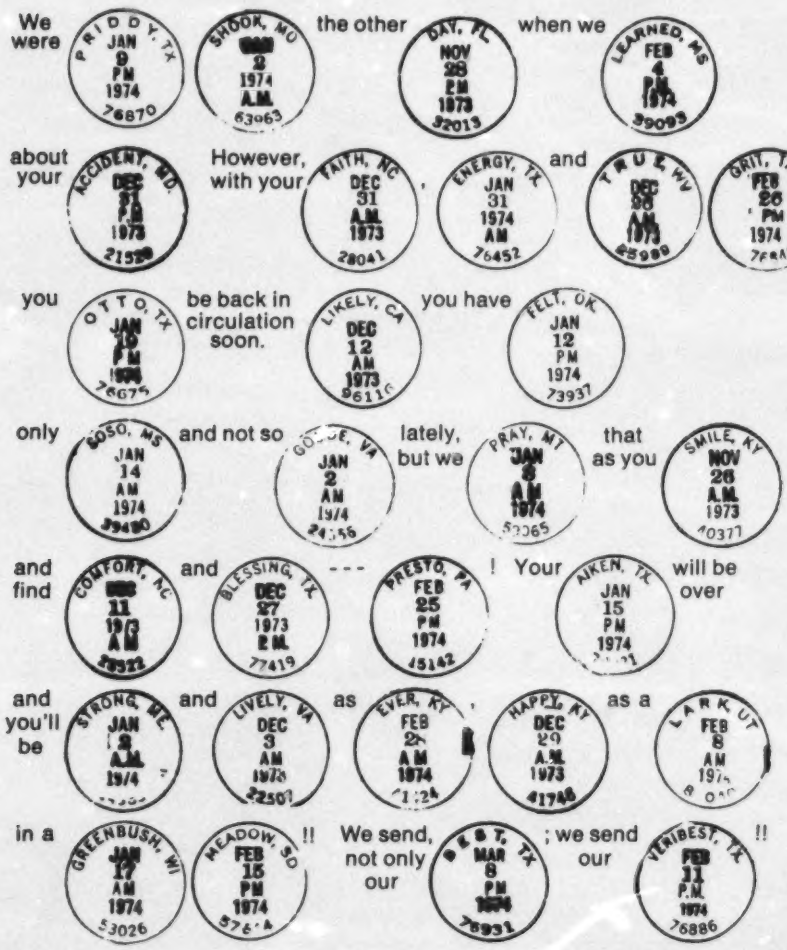
The most famous first day cover originated on July 20, 1969, when the whole world watched on television as Neil Armstrong became the first person to set foot on the moon. The Apollo 11 astronauts carried with them a small steel die that later was used to produce the plates that printed the moon landing postage stamp. A typical stamp may draw between 200,000 and 500,000 orders for first day covers. The moon landing stamp so captured the interest of the world that there were 8,700,000 orders from more than 120 nations!

Watch for announcements at your post office of the dates when new stamps will be issued. Your self-addressed envelope will need to reach the postmaster before the day of issue.

Collecting postmarks is a hobby for the stay-at-home geographer. There are many types of collections. For example, you may want postmarks from towns named after girls or boys. Perhaps you'll collect those from towns named after flowers, trees, animals, or even food. Or you may want postmarks from towns with such unusual names as False Pass, Alaska; Sopchoppy, Florida; Whiskeytown, California; Smackover, Arkansas; Gas, Kansas; or Ty Ty, Georgia. In Maryland alone there are towns named Boring, Accident, Bivalve, Detour, Dames Quarter, Issue, Savage, Secretary, and Welcome.

You can save the postmarks on the letters and postcards you receive, or you can find names that appeal to you in the ZIP Code directory at your local post office. Send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the postmaster in each of the towns you have selected. Your envelope will be returned, bearing the postmark for your collection. You may want to insert a piece of lightweight cardboard in the envelope to make sure that you get a clear cancellation and postmark.

You can even write messages with the postmarks you collect. Here is a sample message.


We were
PRIDDY, TX JAN 9 PM 1974 76870
SHOOK, MO 2 1974 A.M. 63063
the other
DAY, FL NOV 28 PM 1973 32013
when we
LEARNED, MS FEB 4 PM 1974 39095
about your
ACCIDENT, MD DEC 31 PM 1973 21520
However, with your
FAITH, NC DEC 31 A.M. 1973 28041
ENERGY, TX JAN 31 1974 AM 76452
and
TRUE, WV DEC 30 AM 1973 25969
GRIT, TX FEB 26 PM 1974 76446
you
OTTO, TX JAN 10 PM 1974 76675
be back in circulation soon.
LIKELY, CA DEC 12 AM 1973 96110
you have
FELT, OK JAN 12 PM 1974 73937
only
SOSO, MS JAN 14 AM 1974 39480
and not so
GOODE, VA JAN 2 AM 1974 24156
lately, but we
PRAY, MT JAN 8 AM 1974 59065
that as you
SMILE, KY NOV 26 A.M. 1973 40377
and find
COMFORT, NC 11 1974 AM 28322
and
BLESSING, TX DEC 27 1973 P.M. 77419

PRESTO, PA FEB 25 PM 1974 15142
! Your
AIKEN, TX JAN 15 PM 1974
will be over
and you'll be
STRONG, ME JAN 2 A.M. 1974
and
LIVELY, VA DEC 3 AM 1973 23501
as
EVER, KY FEB 25 AM 1974
,
HAPPY, KY DEC 29 A.M. 1973 41748
as a
LARK, UT FEB 8 AM 1974
in a
GREENBUSH, WI JAN 17 AM 1974 53026
!!
MEADOW, SD FEB 15 PM 1974 57754
We send, not only our
BEST, TX MAR 8 PM 1974 78931
; we send our
VERIBEST, TX FEB 11 P.M. 1974 76886
!!

What can you write with your postmarks?

Join the world's most popular hobby and become a collector of stamps, first day covers, or postmarks. If you're uncertain of how to begin, ask another collector to help you get started. Or visit your school or town library for books or pamphlets on the subject. Whichever form of postal collecting you choose, you are likely to discover facts about the history and geography of a country while having fun and making friends.

As your stamp collection grows, you're apt to have many duplicates of some of the more common stamps. You can recycle these stamps as personalized packaging. Start with shelf paper, brown craft paper, or tissue paper. Arrange the stamps in a pattern you like, then paste or glue them to the paper. You can add the stamps before you wrap your gift or stick them to your packages after they're wrapped. Add matching cards cut from the same paper and decorated with stamps. Tie the packages with brightly colored yarn or string. Remember, of course, you can not use this kind of stamp-decorated paper to mail a package.

Addressing Your Mail

Did you know that the Postal Service is older than the United States? It existed even before the Declaration of Independence. The history of postal communication has many fascinating chapters. One of the most exciting—and one of the shortest, only eighteen months—is the story of the Pony Express. Established in 1860, the Pony Express ran from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California. At its peak, it had about eighty riders always in the saddle, forty racing west and forty making the return trip. Each rider traveled about thirty miles, riding three ponies in succession at full gallop. Although the Pony Express was rather romantic, it was also inefficient and expensive. It cost ten dollars per ounce to deliver a letter, and only forty-one letters were carried each trip.

More recent chapters in postal history are equally exciting—the first international air mail service in 1927, the first cancellation of a postage stamp on the moon by the Apollo Mission in 1969, and the story of INTELPOST, the international electronic message service begun in 1980.

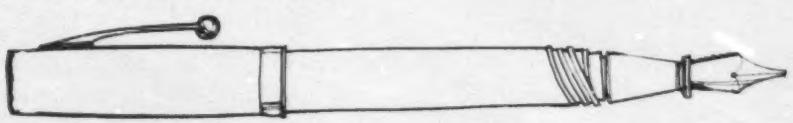
The United States Postal Service is now the world's largest mailing system. It's fun to know, but rather hard to believe, that in one recent year the Postal Service

Issued about 38.5 billion stamps, enough to stretch around the world seventeen times.

Used about 190,000 cars and trucks to transport the mail. Rural carriers alone traveled over 2 million miles a day, roughly four round trips to the moon.

Handled an average of 481 pieces of mail for each man, woman, and child in the country. This compares with an average of 6 pieces of mail in 1847.

Can you guess how many pieces of mail are handled each day? More than 350 million! When you're ready to send a letter, you'll want to give special care to addressing the envelope. Some people think the address is so important that they complete the envelope before beginning the letter!



Letters

There is a standard way to address an envelope. In the upper left corner, write your name and full address: your street address, your post office box number, or your rural route number. If you live in an apartment building, include the number or letter of your apartment. Be sure to include your ZIP Code number. (You may want to purchase address labels with this information printed on them—you can quickly add them to all your envelopes and cards.) If the letter cannot be delivered and there is no return address, your letter may end up in a dead-letter file, a place in the post office where undeliverable letters are sent.

In the center of the envelope, with plenty of room left for the stamp, write the name of the person you are sending the letter to, the street address and apartment number (or box number or rural route number), and the city, state, and ZIP Code number.

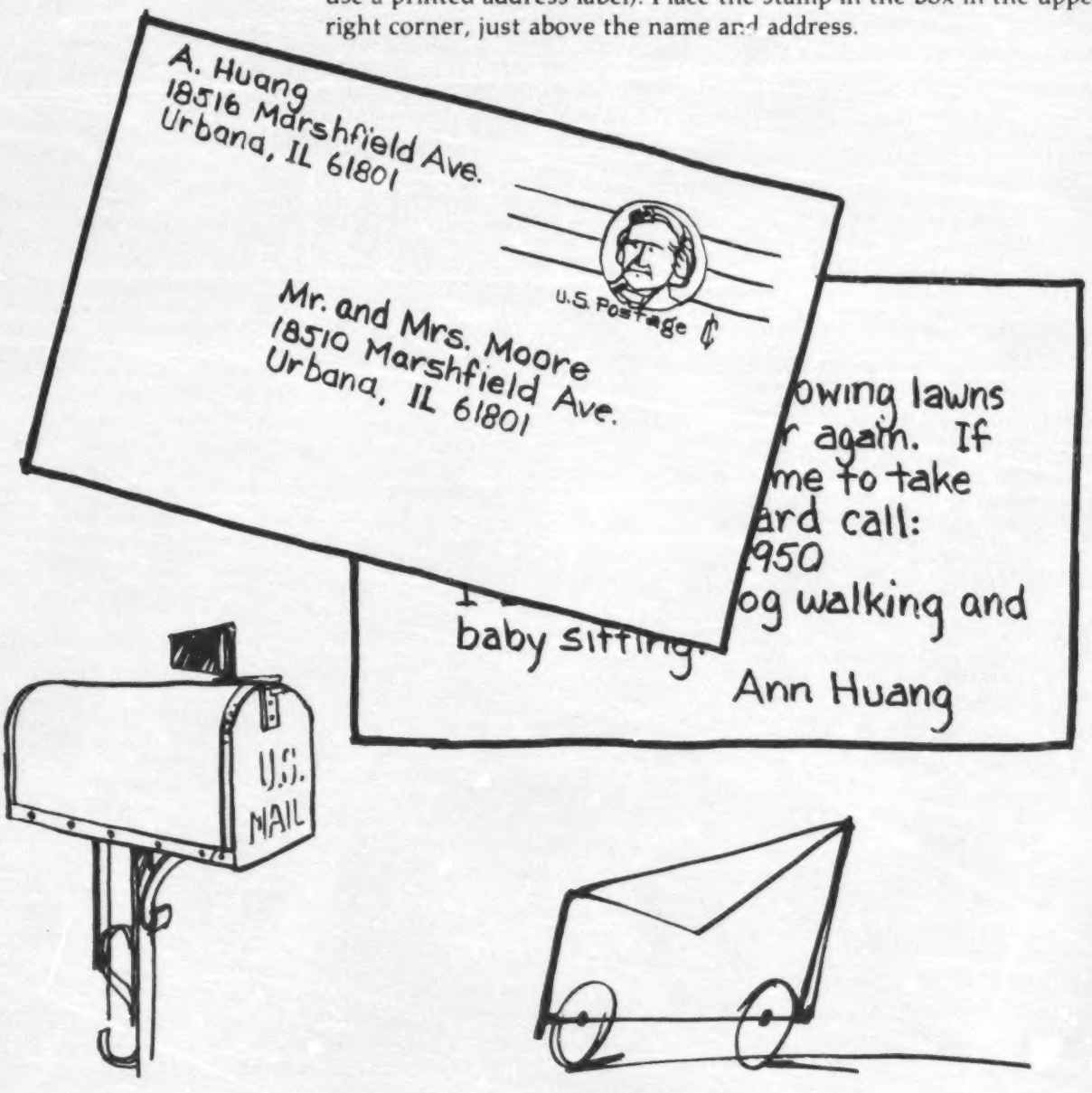
If you shorten the name of the state or such words as *Road* or *Avenue*, use the Postal Service abbreviations.

Remember that your letter might be delivered to the wrong address if postal workers cannot read your handwriting. Write all information carefully and clearly.

Place a First-Class stamp in the upper right corner for mail being delivered in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. If you are writing to someone in another country, you'll have to add more postage.

Postcards

Clearly write the full name of the person or company, the street address (or box number or rural route number), and the city, state, and ZIP Code number on the address side of the postcard. If your message is on the flip side of the card, it's a good idea to write your name and address in the upper left corner on the address side (or use a printed address label). Place the stamp in the box in the upper right corner, just above the name and address.

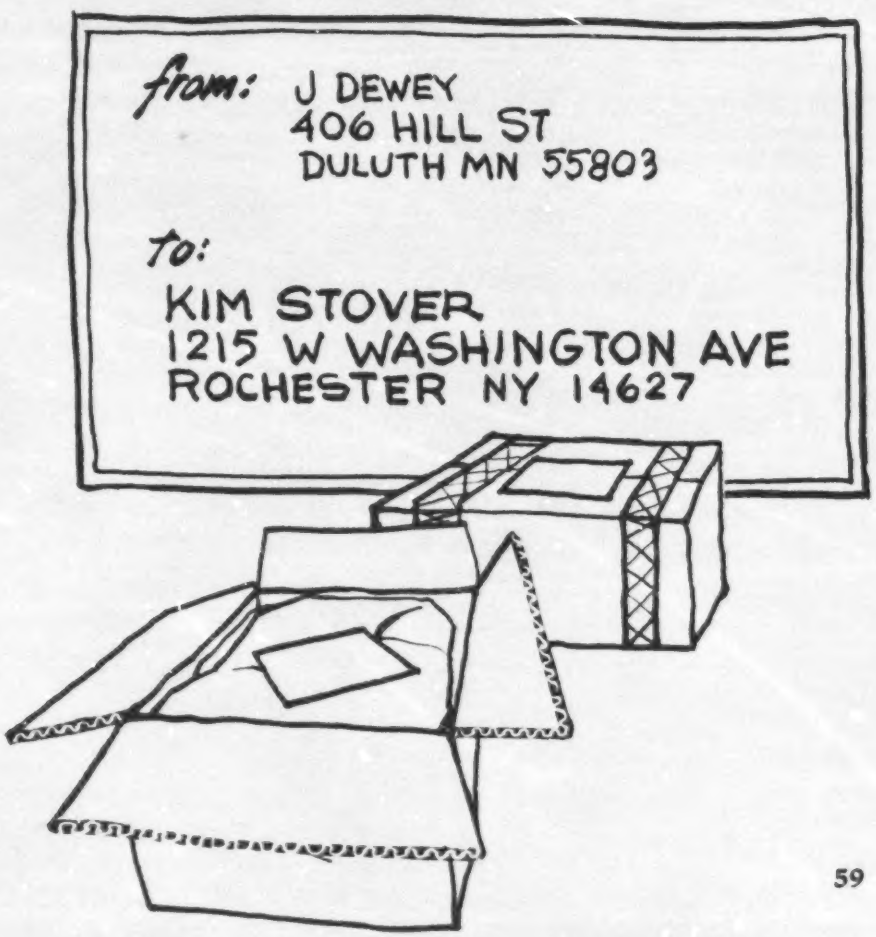


Packages

On some occasions you may be sending a package to a friend or relative. Remember that all packages must be handled and transported, even when going just across town. Be sure that you pack your gift carefully, with enough padding to prevent damage. Seal the package securely with mailing tape.

Write your name, your street address and apartment number (box number, rural route number), and your city, state, and ZIP Code number at the top of the mailing label. Under this information write the name of the person you are sending the package to, the street address and apartment number (box number, rural route number), and the city, state, and ZIP Code number.

Attach the mailing label firmly to one side of the package. The label should be readable from thirty inches away and should not be easily smeared or washed off by water. It's a good idea to place a second mailing label inside the package too—just in case the outside label is lost or becomes illegible.

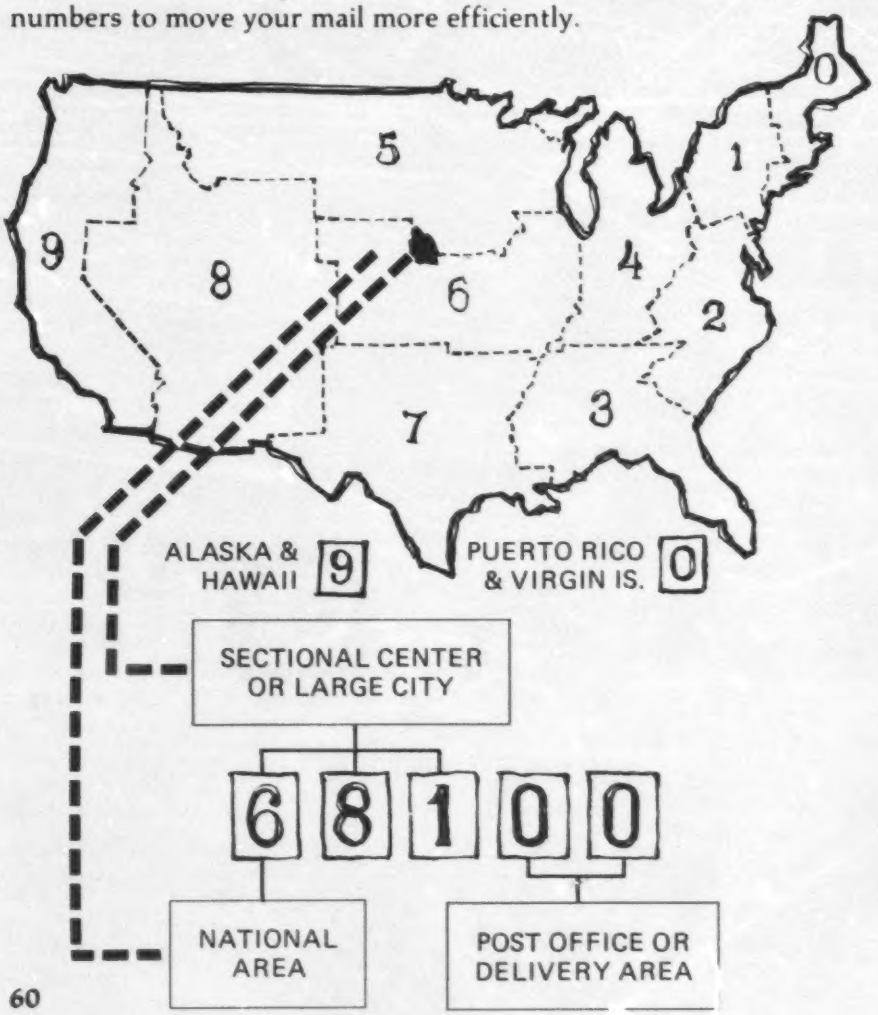


ZIP Code

Do you know why it is important to use the Zone Improvement Plan Code whenever you mail a letter, postcard, or package?

The ZIP Code tells postal workers which area of the country your letter should be sent to. For example, numbers starting with 0 are placed on letters going to the New England States, Puerto Rico, or the Virgin Islands. A ZIP Code number beginning with 9 means the mail is for people in California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, or Hawaii. Numbers starting with 1 to 8 are assigned to other regions of the country. The remaining four numbers in the ZIP Code identify the state, the city, and even the section of the city.

The ZIP Code means people and machines can quickly sort the mail and send it to its proper destination. Letters without ZIP Code numbers slow this process down. Remember to use ZIP Code numbers to move your mail more efficiently.



Abbreviations

State Abbreviations

Alabama	AL
Alaska	AK
Arizona	AZ
Arkansas	AR
California	CA
Colorado	CO
Connecticut	CT
Delaware	DE
District of Columbia	DC
Florida	FL
Georgia	GA
Guam	GU
Hawaii	HI
Idaho	ID
Illinois	IL
Indiana	IN
Iowa	IA
Kansas	KS
Kentucky	KY
Louisiana	LA
Maine	ME
Maryland	MD
Massachusetts	MA
Michigan	MI
Minnesota	MN
Mississippi	MS
Missouri	MO
Montana	MT
Nebraska	NE
Nevada	NV
New Hampshire	NH
New Jersey	NJ
New Mexico	NM
New York	NY
North Carolina	NC
North Dakota	ND
Ohio	OH
Oklahoma	OK
Oregon	OR
Pennsylvania	PA
Puerto Rico	PR
Rhode Island	RI
South Carolina	SC
South Dakota	SD
Tennessee	TN
Texas	TX
Utah	UT
Vermont	VT
Virginia	VA
Virgin Islands	VI
Washington	WA
West Virginia	WV
Wisconsin	WI
Wyoming	WY

Common Address Abbreviations

Avenue	AVE
East	E
Expressway	EXPY
Heights	HTS
Hospital	HOSP
Institute	INST
Junction	JCT
Lake	LK
Lakes	LKS
Lane	LN
Meadows	MDWS
North	N
Palms	PLMS
Park	PK
Parkway	PKY
Plaza	PLZ
Ridge	RDG
River	RV
Road	RD
Rural	R
Shore	SH
South	S
Square	SQ
Station	STA
Street	ST
Terrace	TER
Turnpike	TPKE
Union	UN
View	VW
Village	VLG
West	W

Anything Can Happen

Remember Abraham Lincoln's beard? This very special letter from eleven-year-old Grace Bedell played its part.

NY
Westfield Chatauque Co
Oct 15. 1860

Hon A B Lincoln
Dear Sir
My father has just come from the fair and brought home your picture and Mr. Hamlin's. I am a little girl only eleven years old, but want you should be President of the United States very much so I hope you wont think me very bold to write to such a great man as you are. Have you any little girls about as large as I am if so give them my love and tell her to write to me if you cannot answer this letter. I have got 4 brother's and part of them will vote for you any way and if you will let your whiskers grow I will try and get the rest of them to vote for you you would look a great deal better for your face is so thin. All the ladies like whiskers and they would tease their husbands to vote for you and then you would be President. My father is a going to vote for you and if I was a man I would vote for you to but I will try and get every one to vote for you that I can I think that rail fence around your picture makes it look very pretty I have got a little baby sister she is nine weeks old and is just as cunning as can be. When you your letter dir[e]ct to Grace Bedell Westfield Chatauque County New York I must not write any more answer this letter right off Good bye
Grace Bedell

Four days later, Abraham Lincoln replied

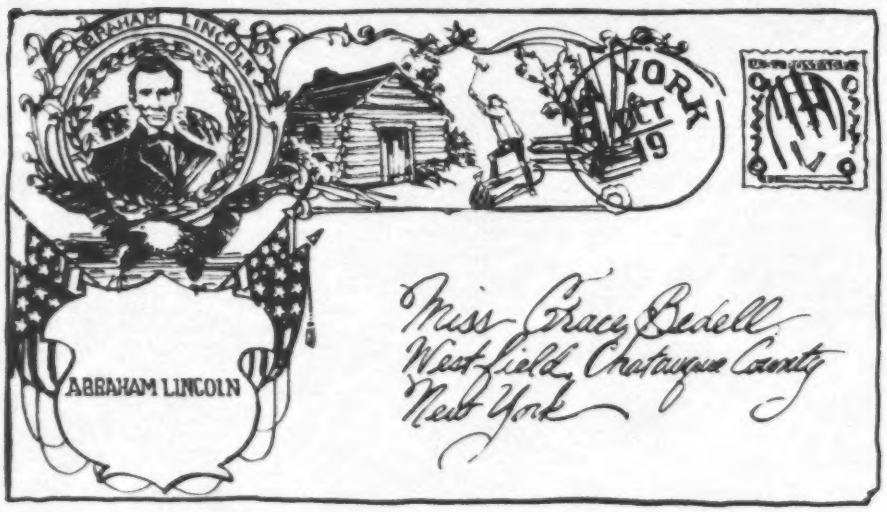
My dear little Miss.

Your very agreeable letter of the 15th. is received.

I regret the necessity of saying I have no daughters. I have three sons—one seventeen, one nine, and one seven, years of age. They, with their mother, constitute my whole family.

As to the whiskers, having never worn any, do you not think people would call it a piece of silly affec(ta)tion if I were to begin it now? Your very sincere well-wisher

A. Lincoln



Letters make things happen. Don't be afraid to reach out with your words. You can share friendships, fun, games, ideas, love, and sorrow. There is magic waiting. People care.

P. S. Write soon!